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Dean Inge and Modern Christianity

ROBERT SHAFER

RATHER more than a year ago Dr. Inge announced that he would retire from the Deanery of St. Paul's Cathedral in the autumn of 1934. Subsequently his publisher asked him to write a short retrospect of his life and work which might be brought out at the end of last year as a formal leave-taking. Something of this nature Dr. Inge had already written, in the Preface to his *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*, which appeared in 1930; and I recall vividly the shock with which I then realized that one of the most trenchant writers of our time could not be expected to remain much longer amongst us, and that his career must be virtually completed. As it turned out, Dr. Inge was mistaken in supposing that *Christian Ethics* would be the last considerable work he would be given time to write. Since then he has published not only a volume of sermons and addresses delivered before students of Cambridge University in 1933 and a brilliant lecture given at Oxford in May, 1934, but a large philosophical treatise embodying his "most mature convictions on the central doctrines of theology".* He confesses, however, to having found while writing this large book that his hand had "really lost its cunning"; and he gives us no choice but to accept the retrospect published late in 1934 as his last farewell to active work and to the world.** The circumstance inevitably suggests certain questions concerning Dr. Inge's efforts, taking them now as a whole, in the service of Christian truth, and concerning too the kind of influence those efforts are calculated to have on Christian belief and practice. Hence I propose briefly to review the career and writings of this very distinguished Churchman.

II

Dr. Inge was born in the village of Crayke, in Yorkshire, on 6 June, 1860. His maternal grandfather was a learned High Churchman, or Anglo-Catholic, and the rector of the village. His mother not only shared her father's religious convictions, but was a Jacobite and a Tory. Dr. Inge's father, also an Anglo-Catholic, was a member of the younger branch of an old Staffordshire family, and after leaving Oxford as a Fellow of his College served as curate at Crayke until 1874.

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* This volume is entitled *God and the Astronomers* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $4.00). The Oxford lecture is entitled *Liberty and Natural Rights* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $.75), and the Cambridge addresses, *Things New and Old* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $1.25). In addition, Dr. Inge published in 1931 *Everyman's Bible*, an anthology with an introduction and notes (LONGMANS, GREEN. $3.00), and in 1932 *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean* (PUTNAM. $2.75). These *Lay Thoughts*, however, had been written between 1928 and 1930.

** It is entitled *Vale* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $1.60). It contains very little that cannot be found elsewhere in its author's writings.

Seven years later he was appointed Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, a post which he held until his death in 1903. His only fault, his son has said, was an excessive diffidence. Early in the 1880's he was offered the bishopric of Salisbury, but the honour "so shocked his modesty that he refused by return of post, without even telling his wife".

The children of these parents were for the most part educated at home during their early years. At fourteen Dr. Inge entered Eton College, whence he proceeded to King's College, Cambridge. There he won a First Class in Classics in 1882 and 1883. In the following year he became an assistant master at Eton, and in 1886 was elected a Fellow of King's College. Two years later he resigned both of these posts to become a Fellow and Tutor of Hertford College, Oxford, where he remained for sixteen years.

As a young man Dr. Inge had had no thought of becoming a clergyman. He had liked best at Cambridge the study of ancient history, and his first book, *Society in Rome under the Caesars* (1886), was the fruit of this study. He has said that often in later years he has thought that if he could begin again he would become an historian. What distinction he might have won in this field nobody can know, but few will suppose that he mistook his calling when he determined to centre his interests in theology – though this is not to say, of course, that the consequences have seemed to be, or are, an unmixed blessing. He applied for deacon's orders at the age of twenty-eight, and four years later was ordained a priest. In the following year he was named Select Preacher at Oxford, and he has since held this post a number of times at both Oxford and Cambridge. In 1899 he was Bampton Lecturer at Oxford, and in the same year published his lectures, a series of studies entitled *Christian Mysticism.* The book served as his announcement to the world of his religious position. It cannot be called a really good piece of work, for reasons which will later be mentioned, but it was one of the earliest books heralding, and promoting, the great revival of interest in mysticism which has been a prominent characteristic of the last thirty years, and it is regarded by Miss Evelyn Underhill as "a standard work indispensable to the student".

In 1905, when Dr. Inge was forty-five years old, occurred two events which, as he has written, "sharply divided his life into two parts". One of these was his marriage, and the other was his acceptance of an appointment as Vicar of All Saints', Ennismore Gardens – a "quietly aristocratic" district in the West End of London. He did not, however, long retain this living, but went in 1907 to Cambridge to become the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. He then expected to devote the remainder of his life to work upon the philosophy of religion. But after three and a half years he was astonished to receive a letter from Asquith, then Prime Minister, offering him the Deanery of St. Paul's. He had, as he has said, never sought preferment, and had had no reason to suspect that he might ever be considered for one of the great positions in the Anglican Church. Indeed, because of his independence, if not because of his doubtful orthodoxy, he had reason to believe that he would not be so considered; and in fact the choice was not recommended by the Primate, but was made upon Asquith's own personal responsibility, though suggested by friends who strongly wished "Liberal churchmanship to be represented in London". Dr. Inge of course accepted the appointment, and found himself, in 1911, in a place of great honour but of very small power.* Though this evidently has had its irksome side, it has had the advantage of giving him freedom for literary work.

Dr. Inge had already done a not inconsiderable amount of writing, and was in some demand as a lecturer and preacher, and Asquith hoped that he "would revive the old traditions of the Deanery of St. Paul's as the most literary appointment in the Church of England". The Prime Minister was thinking, it may be explained, not of Donne, but of Milman, Mansel, and Church. Dr. Inge, all will agree, has amply justified the anticipations thus formed. And if in this transaction we see a Liberal government very naturally rewarding a Liberal clergyman, it remains still a disinterested act, or one proving that Government in 1911 discerned clearly a considerable difference between Liberalism in politics and Liberalism in Christianity.

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* In *Vale* he writes: "I was much disposed to decline, knowing that no power on earth could turn me into an ecclesiastic, and being rather afraid of what I had been told of the tone of the Chapter at that time." But he adds: "A man ought to have some very good reason for refusing an appointment offered [on the grounds advanced by the Prime Minister], and I had no good reason except that I was very happy where I was, and that I was terribly bored by long musical services." Concerning his power as Dean, he says it was "a shock, when I talked to the Archdeacon of London about one or two things which I hoped to do, to hear the answer, 'As long as Canons X and Y are both here, you are not going to be allowed to do anything.'" In general, however, Dr. Inge thinks that his relations with his colleagues have been "good, by the not very high standard of Cathedral Chapters, which have a bad name for quarrelling".

For Dr. Inge by that time had declared plainly that he was not a friend of democracy and that he was not among those clergymen who regarded Christianity as practically identical with humanitarian zeal. It should have occasioned no surprise, consequently, when he reiterated these declarations shortly after he was installed once more in London. This time, however, he spoke as the new Dean of St. Paul's, and, as he quickly learned, his words thus acquired a new value, at least in the world of the halfpenny newspapers. He had been asked to give several lectures before the Women's Diocesan Association of London on "The Co-operation of the Church with the Spirit of the Age". He had approached this subject "with a slight feeling of irritation, as he pictured to himself the kind of treatment of it which was probably expected from him", and characteristically had ended with the determination to speak the truth as he saw it, regardless of expectations. The result was that on the day after his first lecture he became, for the first time, a nationally known figure, and an object of abuse. From this day he was "the gloomy dean" — a nickname which has travelled round the world — though by now, its victim thinks, everybody is tired of it except the Americans and the editors of *Punch*. He was "the gloomy dean", as he explained in his second lecture, by way of contrast "with certain more popular ecclesiastics, who, because they can always conscientiously shout with the largest crowd, are naturally cheerful deans".

At least, so he supposed, from the nature of much of the comment in the press and from some abusive letters he received. He had said in this disturbing lecture that the co-operation proposed in the subject given him might not be possible. The Victorian Age, as one looked back upon it, seemed to be a time of relative unity, as it was certainly a period of hope and of great achievement. But the children were rebelling against their fathers. In science there was an increasing tendency to insist on real spontaneity in natural processes, not reconcilable with the old postulates of uniformity and continuity. In philosophy there was a sceptical reaction equally against absolute idealism and deterministic naturalism, and pragmatism was opening the gates behind which superstition and magic had been imprisoned. In the world of industry conditions which had made England the workshop of the world were changing, and labour, by its reckless effort to secure the comforts of life regardless of cost and at the expense of others, was hastening those changes – was bringing rapidly nearer the day when England could no longer support her population. Probably many who were telling the Church to co-operate with the spirit of the age really meant that the Church should co-operate with the labour movement, but the workingman's dream, while it could ruin his country, could not possibly be fulfilled. Those who wanted to understand their age must critically examine current shibboleths. "Progress" was a catchword which stood for a great deal of nonsense, but people were losing faith in it, probably more than they should. "Democracy" was "perhaps the silliest of all fetishes" seriously worshipped by Englishmen. There was "absolutely no guarantee in the nature of things that the decision of the majority would be either wise or just; and what is neither wise nor just ought not to be done". "Corporate unity" was another catchword which could stand for something valuable but which too often concealed a claim to tyrannical control of the individual – control which it was really a duty to resist. There were still other catchwords which one could not accept at their face-value; for example, "humanitarianism" and "patriotism".

The conclusion was that there were many spirits of the age, none of them glorious, none worthy of undivided allegiance; – and this was to lead, in the following lecture, to the "proof" that the Spirit of the Ages alone properly demands our co-operation. "If there is a single Spirit of the Age she is the spirit of other ages too." And "if we are immortal spirits, we should not degrade ourselves by worrying too much about the *Zeitgeist*. . . . Passing events are only important in so far as they are *not* 'passing', but linked on to some great idea which is working itself out."

The popular response to this plea for intelligent conduct resembled, as I have intimated, a howl; and Dr. Inge was given to understand that it was "a kind of impiety not to float with the stream, a feat which any dead dog can accomplish, and a kind of treason not to lick the dirty boots of our masters for the time being, a complaisance which every live dog is eager to perform". Evidently the man who thus described hostile criticism was nettled but not subdued. Indeed, he proceeded in his second lecture boldly to recount "a certain historical episode":

"Once upon a time there was a great Prophet and Teacher, who lived in an age when His countrymen were very much excited by the hope of a wonderful social and political deliverance, which they wrongly believed to be close at hand. He told them that their millennium was not coming at all, nor anything like it; but He added that He had been commissioned to bring them something better, namely, a spiritual and moral emancipation which would make life happy and blessed for them, whatever earthly troubles they might have to endure. This 'unpatriotic pessimism' was too much for His countrymen; so, although they approved of the excellent moral tone of His sermons, they had Him crucified. But before He died, He founded an order of teachers, who were to go on delivering His message, and no other, while the world should last. He was determined that no one should undertake this business without knowing exactly what he was in for. 'If', He said, 'they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub (that is, a devil), how much more them of his household?' 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.' 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets.' Now it happens that your present lecturer pledged himself, nearly twenty-five years ago, to preach this message to the best of his ability. I admit that I am glad that crucifixion has gone out of fashion; but I hereby tell my critics that I do not care two straws for any abuse and unpopularity that I may incur in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom as I believe our Master intended it to be preached. That Gospel I believe to be pretty well comprehended in sayings like these: 'The Kingdom of heaven is within you.' 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' 'The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.'"

This passage at arms has been described at length not only because it served to bring Dr. Inge before the great world, but also because it sheds a revealing light on his character and convictions. He was not injured by the enemies he made. Thanks to them, in fact, henceforth he was one of England's "prominent men", assured of an audience for whatever he might have to say. Henceforth, too, he was known as a man of strong feelings, with a sharp tongue, incorruptible, not imperturbable, but having the full courage of his beliefs and an inflexible determination to speak in all seasons the truth as he saw it. It seemed equally evident that he subscribed to the full historic faith, not to some watered-down Christianity palatable enough — as long as they could use the Church for their own purposes — to the materialistic atheists who guided the labour movement, and at any rate innoxious to others. He did not pretend, as do many on both sides of the Atlantic, that the religious quest of the ages had really been, all along, an attempt to secure worldly blessings for everybody. He did not come before the public with some story of a cock and a bull, leading elegantly to the assertion that the historic basis of Christianity, though false in fact, was still true for faith. He did not assure men that whatever they needed to believe in order to feel comfortable was certainly "true for them". On the contrary, he vigorously assailed these views and had, indeed, little trouble in making it plain that they really struck at the roots of Christianity.

Yet at the same time he insisted that acceptance of historic Christianity did not involve assent to any dogma impenetrable to reason, and did not bring the

Christian into conflict with any established results of modern science. Moreover, in a long series of essays and treatises he has not only sustained his reputation for downrightness of speech, but has consistently exhibited every sign of candour. He has come to be known as one of those few men who can always be counted on to say just what they think. He can, in other words, be trusted. Hindered by no considerations of "policy" – a demon with his thousands of faithful human slaves – he will answer your questions straightforwardly, honestly, and publicly. This is a great thing. But, of course, it only serves to accentuate the question: What, then, does Dr. Inge mean by Christianity? How can he be a Christian without sacrificing more than he does – without giving up either the historic basis and other-worldliness of the old faith, or else the established results of modern science?

III

It must be confessed that the answer to this question is not altogether easy to find – because Dr. Inge has written too much. With a sustained industry only less remarkable than his sustained vigour and incisiveness, he has written some thirty volumes, besides a large number of essays which remain at present uncollected. He is aware that "good writing is desperately slow work". I quote these words, in fact, from one of his own lighter essays. And his writing is, very much of it, excellent for its immediate purpose. It is workmanlike, and does not call the reader's attention to itself, yet it abounds in telling thrusts, some of them too characteristic not to be quoted:

The normal end of Scholasticism is a mummified philosophy of authority, in which there are no problems to solve, but a great many dead pundits to consult.

Like other idealisms, patriotism varies from a noble devotion to a moral lunacy.

Catholicism and Protestantism are both obsolescent phases in the evolution of the Christian religion.

The Churches have but little influence, and if they had more they would not know what to do with it.

It does not seem to have occurred to any young lady to ask Scott or Wordsworth what they were doing during the war.

We cannot cure the acquisitive spirit by limiting its opportunities. The peasant proprietor is perhaps the greediest skinflint alive.

Instead of frankly coming forward as the party of the great middle class, the backbone of the nation, the modern Liberal hobbles lamely after the Socialists, crying out that he also knows how to rob hen-roosts and back the enemies of the country.

The democratic man is a species of ape, whose strongest instinct is gregariousness. He likes to be in the middle of a noise and a crowd, and to be seen in the middle of them. Be an average man, and you are sure of being always in the majority. Enter by the broad gate, and you will have plenty of company on the road. Don't be a pioneer: it is the early Christian that is got by the lion.

Nevertheless, Dr. Inge has written too much. He has too many answers to our question. They have been composed with many different objects immediately in view. They are, for the most part, effective and truly illuminating within limits, but not one of them is final and complete. In any serious inquiry they must be taken together. Yet the attempt so to do is not merely a delicate and exacting task; it appears, before the end is reached, to be impossible. An answer of sorts can of course be obtained, but none which includes everything its author has at one time or another sought to include therein, and none which is free from real difficulties.

These will later make themselves apparent. To understand Dr. Inge's position, however, it is necessary in the first place to glance back to the period of his formative years. This was the time of the great nineteenth-century conflict between science and religion – a time when, as T. H. Green wrote, "every thoughtful man, accustomed to call himself a Christian, was asking the faith which he professed for some account of its origin and authority". Very many, as everybody knows, received deeply unsatisfactory answers. Very many concluded that religion had been a delusion of the race's childhood, useful no doubt in less enlightened days, but that it was now exploded and, some added, a good riddance. Others, less shallow, better informed, more thoughtful, could scarcely believe that so complete an overturn could be anything else than a blind rush from one false extreme to another. The experience of the race, they thought, had a meaning grounded in truth, howsoever imperfectly it had been expressed in the dogmatism of historic

Christianity; and Sir John Seeley and Matthew Arnold were two of these who sought to disentangle the truth, animated by a sense that its loss would be an irreparable calamity to man. Still others confidently took a position more positive than, for example, Arnold's. Neville Figgis has told, in *Civilization at the Cross Roads*, how they used to argue:

> The only person entitled to a judgment is the trained philosopher, and from such the answer is not doubtful. All who do not write themselves down as incompetent are agreed upon some form of idealism. Their attitude to religion varies. . . . All, however, are agreed that some form of the philosophy which was developed by Hegel out of Kant is the only possible resting-place of thinking men. They differ from the master in many ways, or sometimes deny that they have one. But they claim that the doctrine they hold explicitly is implied in the faith of all; that it combines the certitude of science with the comfort of religion; that with the progress of religion it will become a postulate of all culture. Whatever of the Christian creed may be harmonized with this system will endure; for these are the fundamental ideas of religion; the rest will vanish.

Dr. Inge was much affected by this conflict. It would have been a miracle, and a very undesirable miracle, had he not been. He has recorded the fact that Seeley and Arnold strongly influenced his early thought about religion. From this time he was convinced that no contradiction between faith and knowledge could, or should, be defended. This, of course, was a concession of primacy to knowledge, and an admission that no infallible authority supported either the Bible or ecclesiastical tradition. Christianity, in other words, was not, and could not be, in possession of any special brand of truth, immune from criticism and investigation, somehow or other to be accepted even when it was in open conflict with verifiable knowledge. That which was essential in Christianity must have a firm basis in the unambiguous, continuing experience of men, or, otherwise – so much the worse for Christianity. Tertullian, as Dr. Inge has remarked, said already in A. D. 200: "Our Lord called Himself the Truth; He never called Himself Tradition."

Clearly, however, Dr. Inge felt satisfied that what was essential in Christianity could be saved on these terms. And he did so because he accepted the claims made for the idealistic philosophy above-mentioned, and because he also accepted the claims of mysticism, and discerned a vital point of contact between the two. He has spoken disparagingly of the neo-Hegelians, but his close relationship to them is undeniable, and it is, of course, a familiar truth that those closely related to each other are often exceedingly anxious to disclaim or disguise the fact, or to insist vehemently upon some distinguishing peculiarity of their own. And such a peculiarity Dr. Inge has, in his mysticism, and in the structure which he builds upon that basis. He regards himself as a Platonist, and his Platonism is his mysticism. He claims a place in the long succession of Platonizing theologians who constitute, in his opinion, a distinct school of Christian thought. His predecessors in England thus include Cudworth, Whichcote, Henry More, and others in the seventeenth century, and Coleridge and Maurice in the nineteenth. But Coleridge once remarked of the earlier group that they were "Plotinists rather than Platonists", and Dr. Inge is a confessed disciple of Plotinus, whose philosophy has been his principal study for many years — a study eventuating in the one large work of thorough scholarship which he has been able to complete, his Gifford Lectures on *The Philosophy of Plotinus* — and whose influence it is that brings him, despite certain real and not unimportant differences, into close relationship with the English exponents of absolute idealism who were conspicuously active in the later nineteenth century.

It was, however, not by the pathway of philosophy, but through mysticism, that Dr. Inge was led to Plotinus. The conclusion that if Christianity had any solid basis it must be discoverable, not in some alleged historical event, nor in any group of alleged historical events, but in the unambiguous, continuing experience of men — this conclusion guided Dr. Inge very naturally to the study of the Christian mystics, who made precisely this claim. They asserted, in other words, that the Absolute Truth had been revealed to them, in a manner admitting of not the slightest doubt, and that thus they had received an immediate and unqualified confirmation of the historical Incarnation. Moreover, if they were to be believed, their experience proved that revelation was not an isolated and unique historical event, but a continuously present reality throughout all the generations of men. St. Augustine understood the truth, when he wrote: "That which is called the Christian religion existed amongst the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion that already existed began to be called Christianity." Christ when He lived as a man in Palestine was the incarnated *Logos*, or Word, of God. It is precisely this which is revealed in mystical experience as "the universal Reason, the Light that lighteth every man". Hence the Incarnation may be regarded as a perpetually renewed act within the individual who, in turn, may be regarded as a microcosm. We can, however, only recognize that which is already in some real sense within us. If we come to know Absolute Reality we must have imbedded in ourselves a particle of the absolutely real, a divine spark, ready to become the light of reason in our lives. As William Law said:

> If Christ was to raise a new life like His own in every man, then every man must have had originally in the inmost spirit of his life a seed of Christ, or Christ as a seed of heaven, lying there in a state of insensibility, out of which it could not arise but by the mediatorial power of Christ. . . . For what could begin to deny self, if there were not something in man different from self? . . . The Word of God is the hidden treasure of every human soul, immured under flesh and blood, till as a day-star it arises in our hearts, and changes the son of an earthly Adam into a son of God.

But, of course, it follows from all this that revelation must be occurring in our time just as genuinely as, let us say, in the golden age of the German mystics. We are always tending to forget that God reveals Himself in divers ways to divers men. Yet if revelation is a continuously present reality, it can never be completed within the realm of time, and the syntheses we make – and must make, being what we are – in order to conserve the revelation of past ages, have the inevitable defect of being premature. Thus it comes about that men always stone the prophets before revering them. As a matter of fact, the great channels of revelation in recent times have been the world of nature contemplatively regarded, and the world of science.

IV

This will be better understood if we turn to ask how Dr. Inge defines mysticism — a word still very loosely and, often, vaguely used. It has its origin, he says, "in that which is the raw material of all religion, and perhaps of all philosophy and art as well, namely, that dim consciousness of the *beyond*, which is part of our nature as human beings". It "arises when we try to bring this higher consciousness into relation with the other contents of our minds. Religious mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as *the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal.*" Mysticism, in other words, is a belief that our "dim consciousness of the beyond" is a dim consciousness of divinity within us; and it is a tendance of that consciousness in order that the soul may thus journey, "by an inner ascent, to the presence of God and to an immediate union with Him". This is regarded as possible because there are many witnesses to it. Some who have written of their own alleged mystical experiences have very probably been dishonest in their claims; others have certainly been, wholly or in part, victims of delusion, creatures of morbid fancy, neurotic, or unbalanced by ill-judged ascetic practices. It is not excessively difficult, however, to recognize these, and discard them, using the criteria ordinarily employed to determine the credibility of other witnesses. Such criticism leaves a large number, whose testimony cannot reasonably be doubted, and whose experience appears to have been identical. The fact of this singular agreement of the records, written in different countries, in different ages, and even by adherents of different creeds (for Asia has here its own important contribution to make), can only be accounted for if we hold that the mystical experience is a genuine part of human nature, which may be developed, like the arts, by concentrated attention and assiduous labour, and which assumes the same general forms whenever and wherever it is earnestly sought.

It should not be supposed that there is any special organ for the reception of Divine or spiritual truth, which is simply the knowledge of the world as it really is. Some are better endowed with spiritual gifts than others, and are called to ascend greater heights; but the power which leads us up the pathway to reality and blessedness is, as Plotinus says, one which all possess, though few use it. What is required is faith, and a way of life which is a positive expression thereof. Faith Dr. Inge has defined, using words of F. H. Bradley, as "the felt unity of unreduced opposites". It is, as he has said elsewhere more than once, "simply the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis".* And according to

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* This, we learn for the first time in *Vale*, is really a quotation from F. W. H. Myers.

"the noblest hypothesis" the contradictions which characterize our earthly existence are ultimately unreal; the absolute values – beauty, truth, goodness – are the sole unqualified realities within the field of our experience; and selfless devotion to these, which alone we can immediately and perfectly *know*, may bring us into direct union with God, whose revealed attributes they are. Thus the mystical way of life requires singleness of aim, constant and severe discipline, after the manner of the athlete in training, to free us "from hampering worldly or fleshly desires", and disinterested love, strong enough and deep enough to draw us continually onward along the narrow path leading up to the eternal world of spiritual reality. There is a widespread notion that the mystic way is a course of self-abandonment to an overpowering access of pure feeling. "Pure feeling", however, as Flint has said, and Dr. Inge after him, "is pure nonsense." And to Dr. Inge the mystic way is a progressive integration of the whole personality, motivated by love of absolute reality – the love that impels us to devote ourselves to its object, not the love that impels us to make its object ours – and culminating in a certitude which is not above reason, but which is, on the contrary, alone truly rational knowledge.

It is necessary to add that such knowledge, while it is true knowledge, is never within our earthly experience complete. Because of our limitations, none of us ever pursues equally all of the absolute values; but we should not on this account suppose that it is better, or safer, to pursue one rather than another, and we should faithfully remember that our own is not the only pathway to the summit. If the life of the religioner has its mystical state, so too does the life of the philosopher, the life of the poet when he devotes himself to the contemplation of nature or to the sympathetic study of human character, and, equally, the life of the man of science. Dr. Inge writes:

> Science is a patient conversion of insight into sight, and the investigator is lighted throughout his labours by the torch of the imagination, without which natural phenomena are disconnected, dull, and spiritless. The scientific imagination creates a religion, . . . a pure, humble, disinterested reverence and worship for the vastness and splendour and majesty of the universe. . . . The immanent pantheism, or "monism" as its votaries prefer to call it, which is the creed of most scientists who are religious, is a real religion, which only ignorance and prejudice can stigmatize as "infidelity". In so far as it culminates in an immediate *feeling* of being enveloped by the all-embracing Spirit of the cosmos, or, in Huxley's words, "in the sense of growing oneness with the great Spirit of abstract truth", it is a mystical religion.

The scientist, unfortunately, is as prone as other men have been to imagine that his way is the only way to rational knowledge; and particularly in recent years, both because of his spectacular successes and because of ignorance bred by premature and narrow specialization, he has been betrayed into absurd dogmatism at the same time that he has been unable to attain the true object of his science. Hence it is needful to recall that the world with which modern science deals

> is a mental construction from very imperfect knowledge. The visible spectrum occupies only one twenty-seventh

of the known range of ethereal vibrations. We only see that small fraction of the colours which eyes differently constructed might see. The same is true of sound. We hear over a range of about eleven octaves, but physicists assure us that there must be thousands of octaves. Our mental picture of the world is like that which would be conveyed to an audience by a musician who played on a piano, of which all but half a dozen notes were dumb. If that audience got any notion of a tune, the tune would be largely the work of their own imagination, and would be very unlike the tune composed by Mozart or Beethoven. In these circumstances, science aims at consistency rather than completeness.

And the world described by science is really "an attempt to interpret the universe as a self-consistent harmonious system or law".* Science's "categories are quantitative only, and a rigorous application of its principles would reduce the world to pure mathematics". Furthermore, "the quantities with which [science] deals are hypothetical, since the individual concrete never absolutely conforms to type".

V

Thus, although the pursuit of science is, or may be, a true mystic way, it is only one way; and it does not at all conflict with other ways – all ways being, in fact, not mutually exclusive, but complementary. And all show, as soon as one begins to ask critical questions concerning them, that mysticism, as Dr. Inge came to see, "involves a philosophy and at bottom is a philosophy". And for this reason he was led by his study of the Christian mystics to Plotinus, "the great thinker who must be, for all time, the classical representative of mystical philosophy", unapproachable as he is "in power and insight and profound spiritual penetration". Though Plotinus was not himself a Christian – but was, in fact, the initiator of the last determined stand of classical antiquity against the new religion – he was nevertheless the real source of much in later Christian mysticism; and also of that which passed for "Platonism" both in the time of St. Augustine and during the Middle Age and in the Renaissance and thereafter. Hence he is, historically, a pivotal figure in the Western world, and is likely to be much more studied in the immediate future than he has been, by English-speaking people, in the past. Dr. Inge's opinion is that the "great constructive effort" of Plotinus and his disciples sums up "the speculations of seven hundred years", of "the longest period of unimpeded thinking which the human race has yet been permitted to enjoy", and that in it Platonism "reached its full growth".* This opinion is at least disputable, and seems indeed to arise from the very uncritical procedure of reading Plato in the light of Plotinus's metaphysics, and of later absolute idealism, and of concluding thence that what is tentative or qualified in Plato represents simply the uncertain gropings of the well-meaning pioneer.

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* Recent obvious contradictions between scientific generalizations do not so much cast doubt upon Dr. Inge's statement as proclaim the bankruptcy, perhaps only temporary, of science itself, considered as a guarantor of metaphysics.

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* One is reminded by Dr. Inge's language of much in Mr. Thomas Whittaker's book, *The Neo-Platonists*; and in general it seems to me that Dr. Inge does not give Mr. Whittaker sufficient credit for laying down, as long ago as 1901, the broad lines of a great part of his interpretation of Plotinus. For the student, in fact, Mr. Whittaker is a much more illuminating and safer guide than Dr. Inge – though both writers are equally misleading in their assertions that Plotinus really carried out to its completion what Plato only attempted, with very imperfect success.

This question, however, important though it is, need not concern us here, since we merely have to learn, for the present purpose, the general characteristics of that philosophy which, we are told, mysticism at bottom is. In the first place, it rests on two assumptions which may be said to be common to all metaphysical systems of absolute idealism – the assumption "that truth has to satisfy the intellect, and that what does not do this is neither true nor real", and the assumption "that we are from the beginning in presence of *being* – something experienced, which is 'at once positive and ultimate' ".*

These propositions being accepted, Plotinus argues that reason as it appears in men must partake of "being", which otherwise would be unrecognizable, and that, since it cannot be identified with body, it must be a property of a soul inhabiting the body. Soul in turn is accounted for as an emanation of the soul of the world, which in its turn is accounted for as an emanation of universal reason, which itself is accounted for as an emanation of the Absolute One beyond sense, beyond soul, beyond reason, beyond existence, the final self-sufficient origin and end of all that is. It is part of the perfection of the Absolute One that He "emanates" endlessly; it is likewise part of the nature of Reality that the farther it removes from its Source the more it is immersed in not-being, or the unreal. Pure formless matter, if there were or could be such a thing, would be pure not-being. "Being" is qualified variously with not-being, not only on earth but in the super-terrestrial realm of the spirit, to form a hierarchy of real existences; but there is no possibility of pluralism, or of dualism, according to Plotinus, because not-being is simply and sheerly deprivation. Even a stone or a particle of earth shares to some slight extent in "being", or, in other words, has, like vegetables and men, its soul, identical in nature and destiny with theirs. The differences observable throughout the realm of earthly existence, and likewise those obtaining amongst spirits, are differences of degree only, depending on the extent to which souls are immersed in not-being. Souls, moreover, by virtue of their nature, have no beginning or ending in time, but existed once in the intelligible world of universal Reason, and will some time exist there once more, while in the interval they pass, in successive embodiments, from one level of earthly existence to another in accordance with their behaviour – preserving, however, always their several identities. In a passage of the fifth *Ennead* Plotinus pictures the mode of their existence in the intelligible world, and this I will quote, because no paraphrase could so well convey that which he makes a really fundamental characteristic of existence – the fact, as he regards it, of distinction between souls without difference, and of interpenetration without loss of identity:

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* The fact that these are fundamental assumptions does not appear in Dr. Inge's work, or, at any rate, it is veiled in circumlocutions. For example, on an early page of *Christian Mysticism* we read: "To believe otherwise is to suppose an irrational universe, the one thing which a rational man cannot believe in." It is true, however, that the act of faith, as Dr. Inge presents it, is practically to make these assumptions, on the ground that they are the "noblest". The passages quoted in the text above are taken from a valuable exposition of the metaphysics of F. H. Bradley, in Professor Muirhead's recent book, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*.

> In our realm all is part rising from part and nothing can be more than partial; but There [in the intelligible world] each being is an eternal product of a whole and is at once a whole and an individual manifesting as part but, to the keen vision There, known for the whole it is.
>
> To "live at ease" is There; and to these divine beings verity is mother and nurse, existence and sustenance; all that is not of process but of authentic being they see, and themselves in all: for all is transparent, nothing dark, nothing resistant; every being is lucid to every other, in breadth and depth; light runs through light. And each of them contains all within itself, and at the same time sees all in every other, so that everywhere there is all, and all is all and each all, and infinite the glory. Each of them is great; the small is great; the sun, There, is all the stars; and every star, again, is all the stars and sun. While some one manner of being is dominant in each, all are mirrored in every other.*

The metaphysical system elaborated by Plotinus is, then, a spiritual monism; and the problem which he attacks with unfailing zest and a settled confidence is the explanation of the facts of experience in terms of the scheme of existence of which I have given the barest outline. Everything must be harmonized with it, which is troublesome, because actually much in our experience seems to contradict the scheme. A single instance will suffice to show what is meant: the presence of evil on earth is a grave difficulty – the gravest which Plotinus has to encounter. There is not the slightest room for evil within his scheme, according to which the universe must be considered a perfect whole, and the world of our common earthly experience "a glorious vision of the eternal realities". Therefore Plotinus is constrained to insist that what we call evil is really not-being, or a deprivation of good, or, in other words, a lesser good which merely seems evil to us because, owing to the limitations imposed by our own portion of not-being, we cannot on earth attain to a complete vision of the Whole, wherein all kinds of goods must necessarily go together to make up its absolute perfection.

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* I quote from the superlatively good translation by Mr. Stephen MacKenna, published by the Medici Society (5 vols., 1917-1930).

If one can convince one's self that the problem of evil is disposed of by this line of argument, no other problems will offer great difficulties. Dr. Inge is not amongst those convinced; yet he accepts the philosophy of Plotinus because, as he says, no other philosopher has succeeded any better in solving this problem. He can only mean, however, that no other proponent of a monism, labouring under the necessity of reducing all factors in experience to an appearance of logical consistency, has really succeeded in his effort; and this, of course – while it is in my opinion incontestably true – is an extraordinarily different thing from what he actually says. The invincible bias revealed by the form of his statement will presently be discussed. Meanwhile, it should be clear that the philosophy of Plotinus is the philosophy of mysticism as Dr. Inge understands and expounds it – that this philosophy renders explicit the view of reality which is implicit in the mystic way and in mystical experience as these have been set forth above. The only serious difference arises from the fact that Plotinus has nothing in his scheme corresponding to the doctrine of the Incarnation. Dr. Inge, however, believes that this doctrine is not in conflict with the Plotinian metaphysic – that, on the contrary, it is needed to complete it. And he says, in summing up his position:

> Neo-Platonism differs from popular Christianity in that it offers us a religion the truth of which is not contingent on any particular events, whether past or future. It floats free of nearly all the "religious difficulties" which have troubled the minds of believers since the age of science began. It is dependent on no miracles, on no unique revelation through any historical person, on no narratives about the beginning of the world, on no prophecies of its end. No scientific or historical discovery can refute it, and it requires no apologetic except the testimony of spiritual experience. There is a Christian philosophy of which the same might be said. There are Christians who believe in the divinity of Christ because they have known Him as an indwelling Divine Spirit; who believe that He rose because they have felt that He has risen; who believe that He will judge the world because He is already the judge of their own lives. Such independence of particular historical events, some of which are supported by insufficient evidence, gives great strength and confidence to the believer. But it does not satisfy those who crave for miracle as a bridge between the eternal and temporal worlds, and who are not happy unless they can intercalate "acts of God" into what seems to them the soulless mechanism of nature. Christianity, however, is essentially a struggle for an independent spiritual life, and it can only exert its true influence in the world when it realizes that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and when it stands on its own foundations, without those ex-

traneous supports which begin by strengthening a religion and end by strangling it.

The reader now has before him Dr. Inge's answer to the question which was asked. Unhappily, it cannot be said to fulfill its promise.

(*To be concluded*)

Truth and Error in the Douglas Scheme

Arthur J. Penty

The growing interest in the Douglas Scheme is a sign of the times. It is a sign that the problem of men and machines, which society should have faced at the time of the Luddite Riots, cannot be postponed indefinitely. Yet though the Douglas Scheme is advocated today as the solution of the problem created by the displacement of labour by machinery, it was not at its inception associated with the problem of machinery at all but with that of credit, which to Major C. H. Douglas was the sole explanation of the economic deadlock which the policy of maximum production, advocated in England on the platform and in the press as the way to find money to pay for the War, would precipitate.

According to Douglas the approaching deadlock admitted of a purely technical explanation. It was "as technical as a main drainage scheme" and had nothing to do with morals, politics, foreign trade, agriculture, property, or any of the usual explanations. The banks were accustomed to grant credits for increasing production but no corresponding credits were granted for the increase of consumption. It was unnecessary to go any further in search of an explanation to resolve the deadlock. Douglas proposed at the time two schemes; one which approached the problem from the viewpoint of the producer and the other from the viewpoint of the consumer. To these he added, more recently, a third scheme which is a combination of the two, together with a proposal for reducing the hours of labour, but which has no organic relation to the rest of the scheme. It is known as the Scheme for Scotland (why Scotland?).

In the first of these schemes Douglas proposes to correct the discrepancy between production and consumption by means of an assisted price scheme. Goods would be sold below cost; the selling price of any commodity to be made to bear the same ratio to its actual cost as the total national consumption of all descriptions of commodities does to the national production of credit, while the Government was to be called upon to reimburse to the producers of any commodity the difference between the selling price and the actual costs of production by means of Treasury notes; such notes being debited to the National Credit Account. By this means, he assumes, the balance between production and consumption could be restored, and with it the obstacle to indefinite industrial development removed. The scheme would bridge, without social catastrophe, the interregnum between capitalism and economic democracy. It was, moreover, a business proposition that should be acceptable to both Capital and Labour, for while it added to the income of the workers, giving them security, it did not confer these benefits at the expense of capitalists, who were not called upon to make sacrifices. Thus it made the poor richer without making the rich poorer. Furthermore it did not, like Socialist and other proposals for dealing with the economic problem, violently interfere with financial and social traditions, since it did not challenge the institution of property or our system of investments. All that was required to put the scheme into operation was the support of financial and industrial magnates and labour which in the early days Douglas took for granted would be forthcoming; so difficult is it to believe an idea that is self-evident to oneself will not be equally self-evident to others.*

It is not necessary to go very deeply into this proposal to discover it entirely lacks reality, for a reduction in price is not necessarily followed by an increase in demand, and upon this everything turns. Production and consumption are the most ambiguous of categories, and to re-establish between them reciprocal relationships it will be necessary to discriminate very carefully. Food is production, clothing is production, automobiles are production, armaments are production. The problems confronting these industries are so fundamentally different that there can be no single formula which meets them all. Certainly all their problems are not to be met by selling below cost. There is such a thing as producing more than is required. After 1930 this was notably the case with food, and food-producing countries in my opinion did the right thing in reducing their acreages; for though it is true there are many people today who lack sufficient food, yet even if all were well-fed there would still be a surplus, for scientific agriculture tends to increase production beyond the possibilities of demand which in regard to food are soon reached. Again there are other things whose production is not immediately dependent upon price – armaments, for instance – increase in the demand for which we have no desire to see. Demand for armaments clearly depends on the degree of mistrust existing between nations and only in the very long run can have any connection with price. Yet armaments are production, and if the discrepancy between production and consumption is to be corrected merely by selling below cost it ought to apply to armaments as much as to any form of production. If such a formula is to be valid at all it must be valid everywhere. And what is true of armaments is true of a thousand other things the demand for which may not have anything to do with price. Trades which depend upon fashion are a case in point. Demand in them changes with changes in taste. Again there are trades that depend upon vanity and where to reduce the price would destroy the market. You can't make a face powder to cost more than fourpence a pound, and you can't sell it at less than a shilling an ounce. There are many factors that enter into demand and supply that economists are apt to overlook.

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* The methods employed in promoting the Douglas Scheme are probably unique in the history of propaganda and are worth recording. For a twelvemonth after the scheme was formulated it was kept a secret from all but a very limited circle. Meanwhile Major Douglas and the late Mr. A. R. Orage, who at the time was editor of the *New Age* and stood sponsor for the scheme, canvassed financial magnates and labour leaders to secure their support. None of them would have anything to do with it, so they decided to make it public, and commenced their campaign on its behalf by publishing a list of those who had turned it down. It was a bold gesture; and it was successful.

But even if selling below cost would in all cases increase demand up to the desired point, there are other objections to the scheme. As the efficiency of machinery increases we should be required to consume more and more goods, whether we want them or not, merely to keep the machinery in commission – a horrible prospect! Another objection is that such a wholesale issue of paper money as would be required by the assisted price scheme would depreciate the currency. Douglas proposes to safeguard society against any such thing happening by the fixation of prices. But could fixed prices be maintained under such circumstances? Experience of attempts to fix prices in our day suggests they can only be maintained when the volume of production is carefully regulated, and it may be assumed the same would hold good with respect to the volume of currency. As under the scheme the currency would progressively increase in volume, it may be assumed that its value would fall and fall until a Treasury note was worth no more than the value of the paper on which it was printed, as happened in Russia, Germany, and other European countries after the War.

Up to a certain point the industrial analysis by which the scheme is supported is excellent. Douglas is an engineer, and there is no doubt that he knows what goes on inside a factory. But I part company when he says that the money distributed in wages, salaries, and dividends is not sufficient to buy back the product of industry; in the first place because it is an assumption which is unprovable, and in the next because it will be time to affirm such is the case when it has been attempted. The correct statement of the position surely is not that industry fails to distribute sufficient purchasing power to buy back the product, but that too large a share of it finds its way into the hands of a comparatively few people who can only spend a fraction of their income on consumption goods and invest the remainder in the already overcrowded capital and plant-extension market, on the false assumption that money is never so usefully employed as when it is used for the purpose of making more money. Incidentally this habit – so suicidal from any social point of view, and especially to the interests of the shareholding class – owes its vogue partly to the introduction of machinery which opened up so many profitable fields of investment, but mainly to the degradation of the arts which operated to destroy the wholesome tradition of spending surplus income upon the arts and other things of permanent value which, in times past, by cancelling surplus wealth, operated like a safety valve to keep the financial side of things in subjection. For that, if for no other reason, the revival of the arts is indispensable to any solution of the economic problem.

II

Though the assisted-price Producer scheme is firmly believed in by all the adepts of the movement, it is wrapped up in such an amount of abstract economic wadding that most people find it impossible to understand and in consequence it does not lend itself to popular propaganda. But this is not the case with the Consumer scheme with its proposal to equate consumption with production by a free distribution of purchasing power which has become crystallized into the slogan "Dividends for All". Upon it the popular movement has been built. The rank and file of the movement do not go any more deeply into the abstract side of the Douglas analysis than the average Communist does into the analysis of Marx. On the contrary, they take their stand on the broad common-sense argument that the progressive displacement of labour by machinery calls for a substitute for the wage-system inasmuch as it can no longer be relied upon to provide an income for the worker; and Douglas's proposal to distribute a National Dividend naturally appeals to them as a substitute. This idea, together with the further one, that money being merely the financial expression of Real Credit the dividends need not come out of taxation, at any rate at the beginning, furnishes the popular programme. And these slogans are supported by others which have the magic power of corresponding with, and for simple minds explaining, everything. It is the ideas embodied in these slogans that matter, for they are penetrating everywhere, creating a sort of special atmosphere, a general manner of thinking which unless it is combatted must end in influencing political activity, especially as they are addressed to the central paradox of our age.

Of these slogans the first which strikes popular attention is that of "Abundance Producing Scarcity". It expresses perfectly what is happening, and so long as it continues to happen the money-system will be questioned, for the bankers remain in an absolutely indefensible position. It is no use under such circumstances telling people that all they have to do is to work hard and practise thrift, and prosperity will be theirs; for the spectacle of abundance producing scarcity knocks the bottom out of this individualist theory and calls for a revision of our ways of thinking.

Yet I cannot feel happy about the various deductions which the Douglasites have drawn from it. I cannot bring myself to believe that thrift is not a virtue under all circumstances, and I scent danger in a propaganda which leads people to suppose that a time has come when they can afford to disregard this time-honoured virtue. For after all what is thrift but using any resources we may possess to their best advantage? It goes with a careful adjustment of means to ends, which is not only necessary to prevent abundance from becoming scarcity but is indispensable to clear thinking and integrity of character. Where there is no thrift, there is extravagance and waste which lead to social demoralization; and where there is waste and extravagance there is never enough. To disparage thrift therefore as Douglasites do as a thing belonging to an age of scarcity that can have no relevance in an age of abundance will lead people to act in ways that will deprive them of the benefits of abundance, cutting at the roots of real prosperity by encouraging waste. Yet strange to say the problem of waste under industrialism was the first problem that engaged the attention of Douglas.

I said that to disparage thrift is among other things to undermine clear thinking. It is not necessary to go far to find evidence in support of this contention. The Douglasites' second slogan, contrasting the present with the past under the terms "the Age of Plenty and the Age of Scarcity", supplies all that is necessary to start off thought in a wrong direction, for anyone reared intellectually on this slogan would make a whole series of erroneous deductions that would vitiate his thought. He would in the first place make the mistake of assessing civilizations according to the volume of their material wealth, according to which Greek civilization would take a very low place and industrial civilizations the highest; in the next he would fall into the error of thinking of wealth as a thing in itself apart from the person or people who make use of it, and he would overlook the fact that the present is not as wealthy nor the past as poor as might appear from the study of statistics, because in the past people knew much better how to make full use of what wealth they did possess than is the case today. Carlyle called industrial wealth "enchanted wealth" because of its essential instability and unreality; and it remains as enchanted today as when nearly a century ago he penned those words, because it still eludes our grasp. But the wealth of the past was real tangible wealth. It did not vanish overnight as modern wealth is apt to do. A man who owns a house or a farm possesses real property, with which he can do something, it is an extension of personality, but a man with a million dollars in a corporation is an absentee owner with no control of its policy. His income may satisfy him as a consumer, but it gives him no outlet as a producer; it provides him with no vocation. Because of this fundamentally different nature of property in the past and today the Douglas Scheme is not to be regarded as a form of Distributism as some suppose, and I cannot believe that people who fail to make this distinction have got the solution. Distributism aims at distributing real property, not enchanted wealth.

The Leisure State, the ideal towards which Douglasites direct their activities, is equally false and misleading. It is conceived by the best of them as a social condition in which people freed from the drudgery of labour would be set free to pursue creative activities, art and culture; and it may be that in a limited number of cases the distribution of a National Dividend would be followed by such reactions. But in the majority of cases I am persuaded it would not be so. The majority would use their increased leisure as they use their more limited leisure at present; they would spend their time rushing about in automobiles, going to cinemas, dance halls, et cetera, in a vain effort to escape from the boredom that reigns at the centre of their lives; and as a consequence life would become still more complicated; there would be more concrete roads, more destruction of natural beauty and everything else that makes life worth living, for the popular impulse today is purely destructive. They would come to think of life entirely in terms of amusements, and would think of nothing else, for their minds would be filled with impossible dreams; and as a consequence, work, which cannot be abolished even in the Leisure State, would be felt to be still more irksome and things done in a more venal and slovenly way. Yet if our industrial activities have any validity it can only be because the Leisure State is a realizable and worthy ideal.

The Leisure State is presented as the true alternative to the Work State which Douglasites term the present. As such it doubtless sounds attractive to the multitude who are familiar with the problems of work and fail to realize those of leisure. The Leisure State in practice would, as I have suggested, turn out to be the State of Boredom. It would rapidly go to the devil because of the desperate efforts into which people would be driven to relieve the monotony of their lives. Instead of being a corrective to the evils of modern life, it would exaggerate them; for there are very few people who can use unlimited leisure to advantage, and those few have their roots elsewhere, in work, in function. But if the Leisure State is undesirable, its antithesis, the Work State as understood by Douglasites, is equally undesirable, and sanity suggests the desirability of steering a safe middle course that would avoid both extremes. The Normal Society, the Functional Society would do this; it would be a society in which work was done leisurely. And because of this it would be a society in which the use of machinery was restricted. Douglasites overlook the fact that machinery is not the liberator, but the pacemaker. That this is not popularly recognized is due to the fact that most people are such complete and incurable romantics.

The more thoughtful Douglasites recognize this danger. But they contend that it is a phase that will pass. It might, if the distribution of a National Dividend is regarded as a measure of temporary economic expediency and accompanied by a vigorous propaganda to change mechanical habits and ideals of life. It will certainly not be a phase that will pass if the National Dividend is introduced as a permanent arrangement, as the basis of a new social order in which the centre of gravity of life will be found in leisure rather than in work, which is the Douglas idea. Douglas is the first of the Technocrats. He envisages a mechanical millennium. Some of his followers, those with artistic interests, envisage a National Dividend serving other ends. But according to the Douglas theory they are heretical, and are really engaged in substituting a theory of their own for the Douglas one.

III

I have criticized the Douglas Schemes, exposing their weaknesses. Yet the problem remains, and it looks very much as if, whether we like it or not, we shall be driven by the force of circumstances in a Douglasite direction, at any rate to the extent of agreeing to a more generous distribution of purchasing power. The principle is not entirely new, since as a matter of fact governments today distribute a considerable amount of purchasing power in the form of old-age and widows' pensions, unemployed allowances, family allowances, et cetera. It is inevitable that such distribution should increase, for as machinery becomes increasingly automatic and foreign markets contract, as they will, there must be an ever-increasing number of people thrust out of industry, with no hope of returning; and unless they are supported by the community, on a generous scale, as the victims of mechanization, the gulf between production and consumption must increase until industry is brought to a standstill; for it will be increasingly impossible to bridge the gulf by means of the expenditure of public money as is happening under the New Deal.

The New Deal, if I understand it rightly, is on its industrial side the Installment Plan over again. Faced with the consequences of the unrestricted use of machinery the Installment Plan sought to equate consumption with production by persuading people to mortgage their future earnings; it came to an end when people could afford to contract no more debts. The New Deal seeks a solution of the same problem by mortgaging the credit of the community, and it must come to an end when the Government can afford to contract no more debts. In saying this I am not blaming President Roosevelt, for he was required to act in an emergency and any action in such circumstances is inevitably conditioned by existing customs and prejudices. Until the implications of machine production are acknowledged, it will remain impossible for statesmen to do the things that require doing. Meanwhile the President tells us he does not believe in doles. But in the end he will have to administer doles or restrict the use of machinery. He can't have it both ways.

The consideration that apart from a free distribution of purchasing power the progressive displacement of labour by machinery, by undermining purchasing power, must bring industry to a standstill, more than outweighs for me the grave objections to such a measure that are not to be denied. It is a choice of evils. A free distribution of purchasing power appears to me a lesser evil than industrial collapse, and, as I have said, I support such a distribution as an economic expedient to cope with an abnormal situation, not as a permanent arrangement. I can see no need for it as a permanent arrangement, because in the society to which I look forward, the economic security which leads Douglasites to support the National Dividend will be provided by the Guilds. A free distribution of purchasing power is like artificial respiration – a device very useful in an emergency, but not to be regarded as part of a normal life.

Another reason for supporting a free distribution of purchasing power is that, apart from it, really genuine social reconstruction on the industrial side must remain impossible; since unless some provision is made for people during the interregnum they cannot afford to take long views, and the only measures that will be taken will be those that are a part of the disease. People must live from day to day, and until this fact is recognized, and, provided for, the instinct of self-preservation will lead people to obstruct measures of social reconstruction, especially where they involve a restriction of the use of machinery, when they conflict with their immediate interests. Moreover a free distribution of purchasing power is absolutely necessary if society is to be reconstructed by peaceable means, for if big changes are to be made without any provision for those who are displaced during the period of transition a spirit of unrest will be generated that must lead finally to violence, to revolution and war. We cannot allow machinery to destroy the livelihoods of people and finally escape the consequences, liberal principles notwithstanding.

A National Dividend involves labour conscription. The reason is not far to seek. If purchasing power is distributed as a gift the individual would apart from labour conscription be free to decide whether he would work or idle, and the whole system would break down completely, for under industrialism work has become so hateful, so monotonous and nerve-racking that it is certain few would work in any industrial occupation if they had any choice in the matter; and as they could with a National Dividend presumably live comfortably without working, the incentive to labour would be gone; the necessary work of the community would not get done. Those who would be willing to work would be held up by those who were not. Hence it would happen that "Dividends for All" would be speedily followed by "Compulsion for All".

In the early days the faith of Douglas in liberty and human nature was such that he denied the necessity of compulsion. But he is apparently no longer prepared to do so, for in his "Scheme for Scotland", already referred to, he lays it down that dividends would only be paid to those who were willing to do any work that might be required of them. Thus he says:

> For a period of five years after the initiation of this scheme failure on the part of any individual to accept employment in whatever trade, business, or vocation he was classified in the last census, under conditions recognized as suitable to that employment (unless exempted on a medical certificate) will render such individual liable to suspension of benefit in respect to the national dividend.

What is to happen after five years he leaves us to guess. Presumably human nature will have in the meantime been regenerated. But will it? I have a suspicion the Douglasite Leisure State will turn out to be our old friend the Servile State.

It is not only in this connection that Douglas has modified his original position. Mention has been made of the fact that at the start he denied the existence of any other problem than that of credit. But experience has led him to abandon this exclusive claim, and to admit the existence of other problems in addition to that of credit, as for instance those of machinery, agriculture, foreign trade, morals, et cetera. In these circumstances it follows that the scheme, in so far as it is a logical deduction from his original premise, is invalidated, for we cannot exclude factors from our premises and introduce them into our conclusions without being guilty of the grossest inconsistency. Yet the Scheme or Schemes are still being advocated, just as if the abandonment of its original premise made no difference.

Many people are afraid that the establishment of the Douglas Scheme would be followed by financial disaster; and it may be that the assisted price scheme would have unfortunate reactions. But I do not think this would necessarily be the case were a National Dividend established. It would in England, because England today is mainly dependent upon other countries for her supplies of food. So long as this circumstance remains it will not be safe to distribute much more purchasing power than is being done at present, because as most of it would be spent in food it would go out of the country, thereby giving rise to a financial drain which would slowly bleed the country to death. But in a country like the United States, which is practically self-supporting, both as regards food and manufactured products, there is no danger, because any money distributed by a National Dividend would not go out of the country, but remain to increase the circulation within. Indeed so far from it spelling financial disaster its incidence would not be felt, for the money distributed would, by increasing consumption, react to revive trade, which in turn would react to reduce the number of the unemployed, if not to abolish them. So paradoxically it comes to this: granted self-sufficiency, increase in the amount of purchasing power up to the point at which consumption equates with production would not increase but decrease the burden it places on the community by the stimulus it would give to the revival of trade.

Yet if stabilization is to result the use of machinery must be restricted, for if mass production proceeds unchecked a point comes when the possibilities of human consumption reach their limit, and the system would break down, not because of lack of purchasing power but because of a plethora of unwanted commodities. Yet before that happens I imagine a breakdown would come because of the inroads industrialism makes on the world's supply of irreplaceable raw materials. To ignore this basic fact in the situation is incredible folly. Blindly to trust to something always turning up to save us from the results of our wicked wastefulness is like a spendthrift who squanders one fortune on the off-chance of inheriting another. Science has made us mad.

IV

The issues raised by the advocacy of the Douglas Scheme are of infinitely greater importance than the Scheme or Schemes themselves, not only because it has cast a powerful searchlight on the doings of the banks and because it has exposed the superstition of the gold standard and brought in question the canons of orthodox finance, but because it has been the means of raising the whole question of Social Credit. It has brought into daylight the fact that the economic life of society today is entirely at the mercy of coteries of bankers who inflate and deflate the currency, encourage speculation and then sabotage the resulting artificial prosperity as it suits or they imagine it suits their interests – for the intractable nature of the present depression suggests they have played their game once too often. Moreover it has exposed the extraordinary swindle by which the people are taxed to pay for interest on loans made by bankers to governments, of credit which the bankers themselves artificially create, but which rest finally on the credit of the governments themselves, who have been jockeyed into believing that they have no option in the matter; for it has been laid down by the economic pundits (the bankers' henchmen) that for governments to use their own credit is against the principles of sound finance. They neglect to tell us these are the principles that put money in the pockets of bankers. For these reasons, the advocacy of the Douglas Scheme is doing a vast amount of good. It has exposed the "mysteries" with which finance is surrounded, and it has shown that the monetary system needs drastic overhauling. Yet so far they have not been able to advance any satisfactory alternative scheme. And I suspect the reason for the failure is to be found in the fact that our currency reformers like the bankers whom they criticize suffer from the money illusion.

Regionalism and Nationalism in American Literature

DONALD DAVIDSON

LIKE many other terms appropriated from the language of science, the words *region* and *regionalism* lose all exactness when they enter the literary vocabulary. But the resulting errors and confusions might well have been expected. The advent of the new terms is in itself the fact of prime importance, suggesting as it does that American criticism has recently encountered a problem it was not prepared to face or even to name. In desperation, the critics have made shift to borrow a name, but hardly as yet have they been willing to get down to the business of definition. For one group of critics regionalism is a mere catchword which they use almost as a formula of dismissal for tendencies that they do not bother to take seriously. For another group regionalism is a battle-cry, the symbol of all they feel is worth fighting for in the reconstruction of American literature.

The first group are largely metropolitan critics. Their seat is the seat of power, in the great cities of the East. They enjoy a strategic advantage in that they have the means of conveying the impression that they themselves stand for what is forward-looking and alive; and they are content that the soft word *regional* should come to represent what the opposite party stands for: something, they would like to think, harmless and insignificant enough. But the opposite party refuse to let the soft word remain soft.

They are not metropolitans. They are scattered in groups throughout the United States, now in a city of the West, now in a town or some country district of the South. They belong to the provinces, or, they often prefer to say, the regions. There is war between them and the metropolitans. It is probably only the beginning of a debate which may turn out to be the most important critical discussion in American history, for the issue is: What are the conditions under which American literature can achieve its full maturity?

This question is the central theme of Mr. Granville Hicks's recent book, *The Great Tradition.* Though the major question is painfully narrowed to fit Mr. Hicks's Marxian economics and prejudices, here we may find, incidentally, the typical metropolitan idea of what regionalism is. To Mr. Hicks, regionalism is simply an evasion of the problems that touch the artist as one who ought to contemplate "the fundamental unity of the nation". It is an "escape", which may be merely "antiquarian", or it may be "a sentimental expression of sectional pride". Even when writers deal with "life in a particular region simply because it was the material experience gave them" (like Elizabeth Madox Roberts), they are doomed to sterility if they cannot surpass the narrow regional bounds. The regional approach, Mr. Hicks admits, may be valuable in the early part of a writer's career. "If he knows the manners and speech of a particular region, all well and good. But he cannot stop there; any honest attempt to understand the region quickly takes him outside its borders."

The errors of this view of regionalism are common, even among critics who do not, like Mr. Hicks, hold that a national American literature must take the class struggle as its central theme. The error is, first, in assuming that the character of a regional art is determined principally by its subject-matter, which must be local and special, and next by its manner, which must be romantic and retrospective. The second error, which grows out of the first, consists in passing to the conclusion that regional art is necessarily at odds with national art, or is at best subordinate, minor, and petty.

This may well be the kind of reasoning that will prepare for membership in the Communist Party. But it has nothing at all to do with the actual phenomena of American literature, past and present. If the regional work of art is to be distinguished by its "regional" subject-matter, then what is the subject-matter of the national work of art? Must it include the whole vast complex of our regional areas, or is it a magic elixir that can be extracted from them? It is not easy to discover an American work of art that meets either of these requirements. Where is the novel, poem, or play that deals with an experience of life common to all Americans, as Americans? I can think of one book that attempts to interpret the typical American: it is Henry James's novel, *The American*. But the instance is embarrassing and inconclusive, for it suggests that a novelist must forsake America and become an exile if he is going to purify the American type from all the clinging alloys of local circumstance. And is James's *The American* a national work of art because of its generalized subject, and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* less than national because of its highly specialized subject-matter? Is Poe, who wrote about no particular place, a clearer representative of the national genius than Mark Twain? Do *An American Tragedy* and *Strange Interlude* embody some national tradition not found in *Main Street*, *Winesburg, Ohio*, *My Antonia*, or *North of Boston*?

It is clearly impossible to put on one side the works that are national by reason of their general subject-matter and on the other side works that are regional because of their limited subject-matter. The instinct of our writers, in fact, has consistently led them away from any such false distinctions. Writers who have attempted the great national theme are rare. Whitman is perhaps the single important instance, and the nature of his deliberate attempt to formulate a national theme is in itself very instructive. On page after page Whitman assures us that the national American poem must be written, and he is always telling us in what terms it will have to be written; but he himself does not write it. Instead, in every passage where he wishes to be quite clearly national, slighting no special interest and neglecting no peculiarity, he resorts to the catalogue, and gives us a list of all species and subspecies of Americana. The important aesthetic feature of the Whitman catalogue is its formlessness: the heterogeneous materials do not fuse into a splendid unity; they remain heterogeneous. They may be accepted intellectually, but they do not persuade emotionally. The really persuasive parts of Whitman are those poems, like "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", that touch Whitman's own special locale; and these, too, have as much form as Whitman ever achieves.

The test of manner is quite as unreliable as the test of subject-matter. We could get up a highly miscellaneous list of works and authors that might be considered romantic, retrospective, or even antiquarian: most of Hawthorne, Cooper, and Irving; *Moby Dick*, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, *Life on the Mississippi*; a good deal of Edith Wharton, James Branch Cabell, E. A. Robinson, Lindsay, Masters, Jack London. Are these to be excluded from the properly national shelf, upon the complaint that Mr. Hicks brings against regionalists; and are we to put there, instead, only works that are realistic and topical? There could be no more damning illustration of the low intellectual level to which our criticism has sunk than Mr. Hicks's notion that good art is in the present tense, or possibly the future tense. The artists are not so meek as Mr. Hicks seems to think, and they will inevitably claim the privilege of writing in the past tense if they feel like it. It is not the time element that constitutes the weakness of merely retrospective or antiquarian books; nor is there here any reasonable means of distinguishing works that are regional, not national.

What we have in the United States is a group of regions, and writers in them who exhibit diverse and conflicting tendencies even when they are identifiable as regional by the misleading tests that I have mentioned. It is a kind of special pleading to pick out one writer, Miss Roberts, and say: "This is a regionalist," and then to say of another writer of the same region, who might be Mr. Faulkner: "But this is a nationalist." We must deal with them all together, in their regions, if we are to talk sense.

We cannot define regionalism unless at the same time we define nationalism. The two are supplementary aspects of the same thing. Regionalism is a name for a condition under which the national American literature exists as a literature: that is, its constant tendency to decentralize rather than to centralize; or to correct overcentralization by conscious decentralization. Or it describes the conditions and attitudes under which it is possible for literature to be a normal artistic outgrowth of the life of a region.

A regional literature, so-called, may thus very well be, among other things, a self-conscious expression of the life of a region. It may exploit intimate and local aspects of its scene, thus recovering the "usable past" so much referred to; but it does not narrow itself to mere picturesqueness and antiquarianism except as a reaction to an overdose of metropolitan nationalism. The overdose and the reaction are both regrettable. But the pettiness or belligerency that they produce are not the inevitable features of a good regional literature, for a good regional literature needs only (to quote Allen Tate) "the immediate, organic sense of life in which a fine artist works".

The national literature is the compound of the regional impulses, not antithetical to them, but embracing them and living in them as the roots, branch, and flower of its being. But I must here note that the relation between the national and the regional has an importance peculiar to American literature alone among the literatures of Western peoples. We are obliged to face problems that arise out of our fairly late arrival at the critical concept of a national American literature as the logical accompaniment of our achievement of political nationality; and out of the slowly dawning recognition that our political unity has to be very imperfectly accommodated to a real cultural diversity.

The concept of a national literature is a modern phenomenon, produced by the rise of the European nations to self-consciousness during the later stages of the Renaissance. Before the Renaissance there were critical philosophies of literature, but not of national literature. The European idea of a national literature comes well after such literatures have taken definite shape. It is an attempt to rationalize a cultural tradition which it became almost a point of honour to label as a distinctive possession. The rationalization, furthermore, was made in the great days of the theory of evolution. If the modern Englishman had evolved from a one-cell organism up to the state of Victorian complexity represented in Mr. Gladstone, then English literature had to be exhibited as mounting nobly up the evolutionary ladder from amoebic verse to the lofty periods of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. The scientific analogy was probably a doubtful one, but in other respects the historians of national literatures in nineteenth-century Europe had a good case. They could define the nation's literature as the expression, attained by slow accretion and ingrained habit, of a character that might be described as national.

The existence of such a literature depended, however, upon certain conditions: one language, one race, a definite cultural homogeneity – or at least no heterogeneity fixed by inner geographic divisions; a definite intellectual leadership associated with the centralizing presence of a capital like Paris or London; and besides, a long period of growth under aristocratic and learned guidance, and a second period, no less important from the modern standpoint, of critical and retrospective exploration of the cultural tradition. Whatever critical questions might confront a literature thus formed, no Englishman ever needed to ask of a given work in his own language: "But is it really English?"

Yet in America for a hundred years we have continually felt obliged to ask of this or that American work: "But is it really American? Does it represent the nation?" And we have never ceased to be embarrassed at our inability to produce a really satisfactory answer.

Our embarrassment is caused, not by the impossibility of making an answer, but by a wrong application of the European analogy. We can have, we do have, a national American literature, but not in the European sense, because we have not fulfilled the European conditions. One language we do have, and the rough cultural homogeneity that originates in our basic racial stock. Upon such a foundation, if we had remained a nation of the Atlantic seaboard, without a westward expansion or a great access of immigration, we might have recapitulated European conditions. But in the midst of our nation-making we both expanded into the West and received mixed population-elements that are still far from perfectly fused. Thus we cut ourselves off from all immediate prospect of achieving the kind of unity that in Europe has produced national literatures. Our literature, as an American literature, has no long tradition of unselfconscious growth. The nearest related tradition of that order, the English tradition, however precious it may be, does not come to us hallowed by associations of place and folk-way. It is not a part of our atmosphere, and to apprehend it requires an effort of the will that Englishmen do not have to make. We are a heterogeneous people, who in sheer consistency of democratic principle have learned to tolerate a mixture of religions and races, and not even the levelling power of an industrial system has been able to efface the resulting diversities. But to increase the difficulty, these diversities have shown a tendency to concentrate within geographic areas, which we call sections or regions. Finally, we have no centre. No one city, for us, combines the functions of an economic and political capital with those of an intellectual capital. But in our literary history we have had a series of regional capitals – Philadelphia, Boston, Charleston, New York, Chicago – which have made their successive bids for attention.

Never have we been of one mind nationally; never have we experienced the "national glow of thought and feeling" that Arnold found characteristic of the great literary periods. Instead we have had a series of glows, appearing now in New England alone, now in the Middle States, now in the South or West. The literary tendencies that emerge from this complex of regional aspirations, as they interweave and form general movements, furnish us with the only kind of literary history that we can call national. So long as we speak of it as American literature, we are safe; but when we insist upon its performance as a national American literature, without the qualifications indicated, we fall into error. It is hard to discover the typically American features shared by Mark Twain and Hawthorne, Whitman and Poe, Dreiser and Cabell; it is easier to discover the common traits possessed by members of a New England, a Southern, a Western group.

For some time to come our literature will not represent a uniform culture, but will be conditioned by the diverse regional cultures upon which it depends for its vitality. We should welcome this tendency rather than rebel against it. For out of this complexity we may draw a strength that will allow us to escape the doom that seems to hang over national cultures as soon as they pass their peak of self-conscious unification. No other great literature has ever enjoyed the prospect open to us, of an almost indefinite enrichment from provincial sources that are not, in the usual sense of the word, provincial at all, for our provinces are more like nations than provinces. To use the opportunity well, we have need of a kind of Federal principle in our national criticism; and we ought to be suspicious of any contrary principle which would lay upon us the obligation to imitate the decadent stages of the kind of national literature we have never had.

Throughout our history, however, the question of whether to imitate or not to imitate has been a compulsive ghost, haunting all our moments of earnest self-analysis with shadowy European analogies that in the sacred name of civilization we are urged to follow, or that in the still more sacred name of American civilization we are besought to reject. We ought to shun both alternatives as irrelevant. Our problems are in the domestic field, and ought never to be settled in the light of foreign relations, inescapable though these may be. The domestic problem is, not how shall we achieve a unity that may be spurious and deceptive, but how shall we secure the artistic and cultural equilibrium that will give free play to our diverse regional geniuses.

That equilibrium is endangered whenever, in an excess of critical self-consciousness, we turn either regionalism or nationalism into a shibboleth, making either one or the other an "ism" of the dogmatic kind, with followers emitting aesthetic credos and rigid literary programmes. We then enter the field of vituperation and combat, where the controversial parties are encumbered with the vices of over-simplification.

From Emerson and Whitman down to Messrs. Calverton, Hicks, and Lewisohn, the national shibboleth or "ism" has taken on various simplifications. When Emerson urged that we walk on our own feet and work with our own hands, the grandeur of his rhetoric obscured, for the moment, the insufficiency of the principle upon which he hoped to base the independence and unity of American letters. In that admirable peroration of "The American Scholar" in which he deplored our division into a North and South, Emerson had no better principle of union to offer than the Yankee transcendentalism which, even at that moment, in another aspect than the literary, was about to attack and all but destroy the very foundations of Southern culture. His voice was not the voice of America, but of New England, and his plan of salvation was to result not in peaceful unification but in bloody disunion.

In our own time, the metropolitan critics are making national prescriptions that are equally partial, though somewhat more confused. In one sentence they assure us that the industrial unification of America is desirable and inevitable; but in the next sentence they declare that the civilization thus produced puts upon us an intolerable spiritual bondage from which the artist cannot escape save through the shibboleths of Marxianism and Freudianism. Wearily, they proclaim that America is standardized; but angrily they scorn the rural backwardness of regions that prove to be, after all, less urban than New York. Confidently they announce that America must be industrialized; but they sneer at Mr. Babbitt of the Middle West, the creature of industrialism. They urge the provinces to adopt the intellectual sophistication of the Eastern metropolis; but among themselves they bewail the poverty of the modern temper, which in its sophistication has left them nothing to enjoy.

Their error is precisely like Emerson's and has far less nobility in it. As a basis for national unity they offer the apologetic mechanisms that the metropolis sets up to explain away and palliate its own diseases. The impact of their arguments on American thought has been on the whole confusing and corrupting; but it is now clear that they cannot win out completely over the regions, except at the cost of a dangerous struggle.

For already the reaction has set in. Regionalism, so far as it is an actual literary movement, is in large measure a protest, sometimes angry and intense, but more often calm and assured, against the false nationalism that the metropolitans have been disseminating. No one who has studied American history intelligently could doubt that such a protest had to come. It is the American means of restoring our lost balance.

But the regionalists, in the extremity of their natural reaction, have also not been guiltless of over-simplification. The dangers of regionalism, if in its turn it becomes a shibboleth, begin at the point where aesthetic rationalization magnifies means into ends. Consider, for example, the new "regional" consciousness of folk-art. The immense research into folk-ways that has characterized the regional movement is of enormous instrumental value. For critical and historical purposes we need to know a great deal about American ballads, songs, stories, myths. But there is some doubt whether in recovering these critically we can also recover them creatively, except by simulating a naïveté which, the critics assure us, the modern principle of sincerity will never permit. The regionalist may well retort that naïveté in literature does have a value, but only when it *is* assumed or simulated. The danger is, however, that the regionalist, in attempting through folk-lore to express the genius of place, will be content merely to dwell among the artifacts he has dug up, and will thus narrow his expression almost to documentary limits. We shall have to wait on performance to see what the function of a folk-pattern is in American literature; but meanwhile the regionalist should be warned against retiring into folk-lore as into an ivory tower. Folk-lore is good, but alone it is not good enough, it is only one feature of a regional literature. And the modernist critics are right in their claim that modern issues cannot be evaded. The writer of a given region cannot shut himself away under the name, regionalist; but he must, from his region, confront the total and moving world.

Such calamitous retirements, however, are not implied in the organic relation of regional and national elements that I have tried to describe. When the two become warring "isms", they have the common defect of anaesthetizing the artist against reality. Of the two, considered as "isms", nationalism is the more vicious, in its present aspect at least, for it is harsh, oppressive, and swaggering. Regionalism proposes to live and let live, and its narrow or belligerent features will fall away quickly enough when the repressive force is softened or removed.

I return to my central point. Regionalism is not an end in itself, not a literary affectation, not an aesthetic credo, but a condition of literary realization. The function of a region is to endow the American artist with character and purpose. He is born of a region. He will deny its parenthood to his own hurt. Without its background he is a homeless exile in the wilderness of modern life. That self which he is, if not ignobly impugned, will readily be a modern self; and what he creates, if he can resist the perversions of our time, will be both the expression of the region and himself, no matter what the subject or what the style. It is the office of the nation to conserve and cherish this free effort, and surely never by precept or example to delude us into thinking that a novel about a ploughboy is only a regional curiosity, but a novel about a bellboy, a national masterpiece.

The Soldier Who Walked with God

Part II

FRANK L. OWSLEY

(Editor's Note: Mr. Owsley here concludes his discussion of Robert E. Lee's career based on the monumental biography of Lee by Douglas Southall Freeman. This article covers the period of Mr. Freeman's second two volumes, just issued; Volumes I and II were treated by Mr. Owsley in our February issue.)*

AFTER the death of Stonewall Jackson it became necessary for Lee to reorganize his army from top to bottom. Jackson's corps was put under the command of Ewell, who was so weak and debilitated from the loss of a leg and from dyspepsia that Lee doubted his ability to keep the field; A. P. Hill, a good fighter, but a poor tactician and strategist, was given command of the new third corps drawn in part from the second and first corps of Jackson and Longstreet. Similar changes and promotions were made below because of casualties among the lower grades. The army, as an organization, was, in fact, about as new as it had been at the beginning of the Peninsular campaign the year before. Lee could not predict the conduct in battle of any corps commander, including Longstreet, or of many of his major or brigadier generals. It was

* R. E. LEE *by Douglas Southall Freeman.* Volumes III & IV (SCRIBNER'S. 559 & 594 pp. $3.75 each).

with such an organization that he commenced his second invasion of the North to find food for horses and men, to encourage the peace movement, and to win, perhaps, a decisive victory upon the enemy's soil. If Lee could not predict the conduct of his generals, he was supremely confident of his ragged army. The private soldiers were seasoned, their morale was high, their discipline perfect and their endurance almost unbelievable. Full rations were luxuries which his soldiers had seldom known. Frequently they marched two or three days without any food at all; other times they fought a campaign on a few ears of parched corn.

The invasion of Pennsylvania was accompanied by what proved to be a fatal error, though at the time there was nothing to indicate that it was such. Lee ordered Stuart to ride around Hooker's army by crossing the Rappahannock below his left flank. Stuart was then to place himself on the right flank of the Confederate army and shield its movements from the Federals. There was, however, a condition attached: in case Stuart found the enemy in strength on the left flank, he was to reverse his march and cross above the enemy and thereby maintain contact with the Confederate forces all the time. Stuart did not find the enemy in force on the lower Rappahannock, but when he crossed the Potomac near Washington he discovered that the Federal army had not remained on the Rapidan but had also crossed the Potomac. It was too late to turn back in time to act as screen for the Confederates who were well over in Pennsylvania. It was more economical to cut his way through and join Lee. However, as it developed, Stuart was unable to reach Lee in time to aid in the battle of Gettysburg. Lee always gave Stuart orders contingent upon a changing situation – for it seems hardly possible that a cavalry officer could successfully operate under any other kind in a large area. Usually Stuart's rides were successful, so much so that Lee said of Stuart, after the latter's death, that he had never failed to bring him correct information. Lee trusted only Stonewall and Stuart in obtaining accurate information. (After the death of those two men, he discovered that General Gordon possessed high qualities as a reconnaissance officer, but Lee was forced more and more to make his own investigations of enemy positions and strength.) Under the almost uniform success of Stuart when acting on such orders, it is not sound criticism to state categorically, as some critics have, that one of Lee's weaknesses as a general was the conditional orders which he gave his generals. In a battle-field too large to be supervised personally, and where proper telegraphic communications were lacking, it would seem that common sense would demand that discretion should be given the general in command at any remote point. Such was Lee's theory, and it succeeded much more often than it failed.

The battle of Gettysburg would not have occurred at that point had Stuart been with Lee's army; nor is it probable that it would have been a drawn battle had Longstreet obeyed orders on the second of July when he was ordered to take little Round Top before the Federals had taken it in force. From this point, if the Confederates had taken it, the Federal forces could have been enfiladed with artillery at the same time that Ewell delivered an enfilading fire from Culp Hill on the Federal right. Again had Longstreet delivered his attack at daybreak of July 3, as he had been ordered, instead of waiting until afternoon when the enemy had thoroughly strengthened the centre of the line, it is difficult to see how he could have failed; this is emphasized by the fact that even the charge under Pickett, which comprised only a portion of Longstreet's corps, succeeded in penetrating the Federal lines a quarter of a mile. But Longstreet deliberately disobeyed Lee and tried until the very moment of Pickett's charge to impose upon the Confederate Commander his plan to turn the enemy's left flank. Lee, who had always favoured flanking movements, was unwilling to make this one in absence of any knowledge of the disposition of the enemy behind the ridge; and it later proved to be a correct judgement as the enemy was in great force behind the left flank.

The disobedience of Longstreet brought no reprimand. Lee was still convinced that that General was the best corps commander he had, and history will uphold that judgement. Hill and Ewell were neither as good strategists nor as good tacticians as Longstreet, nor were they as steady under fire. Longstreet's rebellious temperament was all that stood in the way of his being a great general.

When the spring of 1864 opened, it found the Confederate army, man and beast, ragged and ill-fed. Thousands of the army horses and mules had died of starvation or were unable to draw the wagon trains and artillery. This situation almost destroyed the mobility of Lee's army until crops could be grown behind the lines to feed men and horses. Lee repeated the strategy which he had employed against Hooker the year before in the battle of Chancellorsville, and practically on the same spot, when he permitted Grant to cross both the Rappahannock and Rapidan without molestation. Grant was obviously overconfident, for he crossed the river and marched into the wilderness without sufficient flank and rear guard protection. The result was that Lee with an army of 60,000 marched into the tangled wilderness and fell upon the Federal army numbering about 120,000 men. He struck them from the rear and on the right flank, and it was Longstreet who carried out the flanking movement as Jackson had the year before at the same spot. Like Jackson, Longstreet was shot down and disabled for the rest of the campaign. The Federal loss was 17,800 men. However, the army did not retreat across the Rappahannock.

Lee was aware that Grant was a stubborn fighter. Grant's own army, too, realized it, for instead of marching back to the river he marched by the left flank at night in a swift effort to place his army between Lee's army and Richmond. Lee expected him to do this and rushed the First Corps, now commanded by Anderson, to Spottsylvania Court House while he withdrew his other troops from the battlefield to reinforce Anderson. Anderson's troops on reaching Spottsylvania ahead of Grant raised the shrill, quavering, rebel yell which passed down the line of Hill's marching corps back to Ewell's Second Corps still in the Wilderness, and back to Anderson's, where it started back again to the Wilderness. In the dark depressing gloom just before the break of day of May 7, this weird demonstration must have awakened dark thoughts in the minds of Grant's soldiers who were marching to take their place before the entrenched position of the Confederate Army. The position taken by Lee was a strongly entrenched semicircle, with a salient at the centre. Grant threw his army against the Confederate breastworks and attempted flanking movements only to find a strongly entrenched force in his path, then returned to the battering of the breastworks until he had lost over 30,000 men. The battle lasted from May 8 through May 21. Yet Grant determined, as he said, "to fight it out along this line if it takes all summer", and, he might have added, "the whole Federal army". He had lost about 47,000 men in three weeks, Lee about 15,000.

Grant's next move was another attempt to slide around Lee's right flank and get in between the Confederate Army and Richmond, at Hanover Junction. But again he was foiled. Lee retreated to the south bank of the North Anna and entrenched. Grant threw his left and his right wings across the river, but in the midst of this double flanking movement, Lee seized the high banks of the North Anna opposite Grant's centre, and thus divided Grant's army in two. The position of Lee's army was that of an inverted V. It made it impossible for Grant to use either wing to reinforce the other. On the other hand Lee was in a position to reinforce either wing of his own army with the greatest speed. As far as I know, it is a unique strategic movement carried out without premeditation, but as an opportunist stroke to checkmate Grant's shortsighted manoeuvre. Grant was not too stubborn to withdraw as soon as possible under the cover of night. This was the only piece of strategy which Grant attempted during this hammer-and-tongs campaign and it was so bad that he realized that a battle fought in such a position would be more disastrous than that of Spottsylvania.

From this point Grant marched rapidly to the position around Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor which McClellan had occupied two years before. But Lee was waiting for him behind breastworks. The Federal commander was so exasperated and maddened by Lee's swift marches and constant entrenchment that he lost his head and ordered a frontal attack. It is said that he sent in storm-troops in ranks fourteen men deep, only to have them mowed down by artillery and rifles at point-blank range. Again and again Grant ordered his troops to storm the Confederate works. It was sure death and the men pinned their names and addresses on their backs and bravely went to their certain doom. Finally the army refused to charge, very much as it had under Burnside at Fredericksburg. It was another massacre. This was on June 3, 1864, less than a month since Grant had crossed the Rapidan. He had lost 54,000, or nearly half of his original army. (Of course his army was being recruited rapidly so that it remained above 100,000. But the troops filling the ranks were always inferior. Negroes and mercenaries were taking the place of native sons who had not been fighting for money.) During this time Lee had lost 19,000.

Grant now executed a swift change of base to the James River such as McClellan had made in 1862. He crossed to Petersburg, but found Beauregard and most of Lee's army waiting him behind the breastworks. Another frontal attack and the famous battle of the

Crater ended on July 27 the campaign which Grant had boasted would continue along this line if it took all the summer. Yet there were months in which manoeuvring and campaigning were possible. But Grant's loss had now risen to 64,000 and even he realized that further fighting was impossible for the time being.

What made further fighting such as he had been carrying on impossible was the state of mind in the North. They were denouncing Grant as a butcher and asking for his removal; besides, General Early was operating in the Valley and was soon to march up to the outworks of Washington and force Grant to send detachments from his army in front of Petersburg. According to Rhodes, Grant settled down to gloomy despair and hard drinking, while Meade carried on the siege. Public opinion in the North was such that Lincoln fully believed that the Democratic party would win, and the platform of the Democratic party demanded peace. Independence was in sight when Grant, by settling down before Petersburg in the middle of the summer, admitted defeat at the hands of Lee.

But Jefferson Davis, with his strong prejudices and often unsound judgement of men and military affairs, intervened at this time and did two things to bring down ruin upon the Confederacy. He chained Lee to the defense of Petersburg and Richmond at the very moment when Lee's army could have lived off the country and manoeuvred for position, a game in which Grant was not a good player (in fact Grant boasted that he never manoeuvred, but just fought) and one in which Lee was master. Lee had, since 1863, wanted to abandon the capital and retire to the Valley where he could operate upon the rear of any army which might invade Virginia, or upon Washington, and finally upon the rear of Sherman's army. By chaining Lee down, Davis was instrumental in rendering the army immobile. The horses were so weak by winter that it was obvious that they could not haul the artillery and wagon trains, and the men were so badly clad and fed that they were hardly capable of sustaining a long march. Lee's only chance of success, after the winter rains set in, was for Grant to repeat those suicidal frontal attacks of the Spottsylvania Courthouse and Cold Harbor. Grant, however, had no taste for such murderous work any more. Besides, he had without doubt been cautioned by Lincoln that the North could not stand another such performance. So Lee's confidence in Confederate success dwindled as spring approached and he considered the possibility of a withdrawal and a junction with Johnston, who had been restored to his command after Hood had practically destroyed it by his poor military judgement.

The second act of Davis which hastened and made almost certain the doom of the Confederacy was his summary dismissal of Joseph E. Johnston from the command of the Army of Tennessee. Johnston was leading Sherman as far from his base as possible with the ultimate aim of turning his flanks and cutting off his line of supplies, or of constantly fighting him from a defensive position just as Lee was fighting Grant at the same time. The dismissal of Johnston, as I have suggested, destroyed the Army of Tennessee and made Sherman's ravaging of Georgia and the Carolinas possible; and this war upon non-combatants disheartened the families of those who composed much of Lee's army, and contributed greatly to the desertion from the Army of Northern Virginia.

When Lee notified Davis that he would be compelled to evacuate Petersburg, the President refused to believe such a contingency possible and delayed Lee so long that the Confederate General, had there ever been a chance of withdrawal after the fall of 1864, found no avenue of escape when he marched his men out from behind the breastworks. If Lee had been able to escape even in the spring of 1865 there were strong probabilities of success. By joining his army with that of Johnston's, and picking up the scattered forces such as those of Forrest on this side of the Mississippi, and moving to the Trans-Mississippi where numerous forces under the general command of Kirby Smith were stationed, Lee could have assembled an army of 150,000 already under arms. The cavalry could have been remounted and the armies better fed in this region. It was Lee's plan to assemble the Confederate armies in this region and wear down the patience of the Northern public, which as I have suggested – but which Freeman overlooks – was hardly able to stand another great battle. However, Davis's stubborn unwillingness to let General Lee or any other man tell him the truth defeated this plan. The surrender of Lee's army cut the heart out of all those who were willing to fight on under his leadership, and brought the collapse of the Confederate military power and the fall of that government.

Lee after Appomattox, the President of Washington College, according to Freeman's presentation and according to tradition, was the spiritual exemplar for the South. To the Southern people he was not only the greatest soldier but the greatest gentleman and the greatest saint of the ages. Freeman is undoubtedly correct in leaving the impression that Robert E. Lee was still Commander-in-Chief of the South during the remainder of his life and that his spirit hovered over the South after his body had decayed. His patient, uncomplaining attitude in the face of petty persecution at the hands of the Federal Government and the radicals of the North, who demanded his head and spread rumors of Lee's duplicity and cruelty, poured oil upon the troubled waters and restrained many a hothead who would have sprung to arms at the first sign from Lee. This was most particularly true after the Radical Republicans had gained control of the Federal Government and had disfranchised or debarred from public office the leaders of the South, including Lee, and had set over the Southern states governments ruled by the enfranchised slaves.

Lee's administration of Washington College was successful beyond all expectations. The endowment was increased, the student body soon ranked fourth or fifth among American universities, and the curriculum became, without doubt, the most liberal and modern. While holding on to the old classical education, Lee added departments or schools of engineering, chemistry, physics, agriculture, and horticulture. His ideas were always practical either as a soldier or as a college president and he saw clearly, and so admonished the South, that its salvation lay in hard work and most particularly hard work with the hands. The use of chemistry and of scientific agriculture in rehabilitating the neglected and eroded fields of the South was, perhaps, the uppermost thought in planning the new curriculum. His experience in the war made him more conscious than any other Southerner of the industrial deficiencies of his section. Somewhat in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson and Calhoun after the war of 1812, Lee urged the study of mechanical, mining, and civil engineering. Unlike the "New South Champions" such as Henry Grady, L. Q. C. Lamar, and Walter Hines Page, Lee always regarded agriculture as the most pleasant occupation as well as the most dignified. He would have deplored, undoubtedly, the "New South" doctrines soon to become so widely disseminated, namely that the true destiny of the South was to become a great industrial community in which agriculture played a menial rôle.

In war or peace, Lee proved himself a great man. Always serene, simple, and straightforward in manner, yet reserved and dignified, there is much similarity of character between George Washington and Robert Lee. Washington, though possessed of great integrity, self-control, and generosity, was lacking in the profoundly religious nature which sustained Lee in his hours of triumph and defeat. However, as Freeman observes, Lee became interested in religion only in middle life, when his children were being confirmed in the Episcopalian Church. His conduct before his confirmation had been guided by the code of a gentleman which, Freeman astutely points out, was practically identical with Christian ethics, so that Lee's bearing was unchanged by his religious conversion.

But whether Lee was a simple soul or whether he, like Washington, was a man of many complex impulses and hidden battles always gained in the end, so that his conduct was simple and straightforward, cannot be answered as categorically as Freeman attempts to answer it in his last chapter. I am of the opinion that Lee was a man of many human impulses not all of which were approved by his Christian code or by the code of a gentleman; yet however much wild thoughts, like crows, might fly over his head, they never found nesting place within. But Lee's few expressions about the war, to Lord Acton for instance; his reprimand of the young student who complained that he had wasted four years in the Confederate Army, and to whom Lee said: "*However long you live and whatever you accomplish, you will find that the time you spent in the Confederate Army was the most profitably spent portion of your life*"; and his dying words: "*Tell Hill he must come up*" and "*Strike the tents*", indicate that he brooded over what might have been and over what might be if he had said the word.

In closing this review of Freeman's life of Lee it is hardly necessary to repeat that it is practically everything that a military biography should be. Its only serious shortcoming is the author's inadequate knowledge of public opinion North and South.

The Tenant Farmer in the South

RICHMOND CROOM BEATTY *and* GEORGE MARION O'DONNELL

THE consultations that are being held to diagnose and prescribe for the malady of the prostrate Southern farmer are becoming tedious for a quite simple reason: there are too many specialists involved. It is as though his disease were of some strange, tropical variety, so unusual in its symptoms as to attract uninvited surgeons who are interested in him for no selfish reason at all. The family physician has been fairly crowded out of the house: and between gasps and during periods of fretful consciousness the patient hears a language that is alien in accent – alien, and in large measure bewildering. Who are these gentlemen, he wants to know, with their detached expressions and elaborate paraphernalia? And what do they propose to do with him?

Well, they all represent rather clearly defined, if divergent, points of view. The one among them he is most likely to recognize is the Liberal, who has grown up in his own section. He is the sort of person who has traditionally respected the good Whig principle that if the kind of wealth represented by industrialism is brought to the South in sufficient quantities, the troughs of the industrial leaders will be filled to overflowing, and that what *does* overflow will trickle down, however feebly, to the hungry mouths of the masses. After all, says this type of thinker, have not our men of wealth in the past almost uniformly redistributed the fortunes they have earned? And we hear high talk about the Rockefeller Institute, the Carnegie Libraries, the Huntington Library, the Detroit Symphony, the Chicago Civic Opera; or, more specifically, of Duke, Emory, and Vanderbilt Universities, and of a restored Williamsburg. Such talk makes fairly good argument; and for those who – after having been disfranchised and robbed systematically for seventy years – are content with crumbs and scraps, it should suffice, and does. Besides, we are told, industrialism has solved the former health menace of the South. In the words of Ellen Glasgow: "I grant that I do not enjoy fully a South of smoke and factories; but neither would I have enjoyed a South of hookworm and malaria." Apparently, we are to think, the bathtub was worth the smokestack that came with it, and the simple introduction of these two innovations tells the whole story of the difference between the old South and the new.

(It should be plain from the preceding paragraph that in our definition of the loose term *Liberal* we are implying the Henry Grady, Walter Hines Page type of Southerner, the type that would have us industrialize the South on the sweet assurance that the evils of industrialism will somehow – probably because of an innate Southern "chivalry" of temperament – disappear in this section. These doctrinaires are the most thoroughly corrupt of all who would reorganize the Southern economy; for they are the only ones who lack the courage to admit that their *primary* interest is in the perpetuation of the industrialist principle.

What they really want, they declare, is merely a South that can be no longer considered *backward*, a South toward which they can "point with pride" when visiting, say, in Chicago or Detroit.)

Then there are the Communists—the leaders of what Dr. Frank Owsley has called the "third crusade" against the South ("Scottsboro: The Third Crusade", AMERICAN REVIEW, Summer, 1933). These thinkers have been upset by three phenomena: First, by the fact that Negroes are excluded from jury service (in flagrant violation of the Fourteenth Amendment!). Secondly, by the fact that when strongly suspected of rape they are sometimes lynched. Thirdly, by the belief that the fate of the Southern industrial worker is bound up with the fate of the Southern Negro, and that so long as the two are kept by moribund prejudice from uniting as brothers and seeking their salvation jointly, just so long will labour conditions in the section remain deplorable. But the Communists have run into an utterly incomprehensible situation in the South. They have found, that is, that except in Birmingham—a noted cultural centre—talk about the mystic, casteless brotherhood is simply wasted. In the more rural districts their spokesman gets no encouragement: his "poor-white" audience, according to one of their sympathizers, Mr. Heywood Broun, is so unreasonably obsessed with its idea of an imagined racial "superiority", that it prefers poverty to union, tumbledown shanties to economic salvation. And, strangest thing of all, the Negroes seem to prefer such things too! The Communists, in other words, have encountered a sense of tradition and conservatism that is actually still alive.

Finally, there are the Sociologists. One of their spokesmen, Mr. W. T. Couch, has even announced a plan ("An Agrarian Programme for the South", AMERICAN REVIEW, Summer, 1934); and so remarkable is it for a sociologist actually to venture a solution to a problem that one is tempted to analyze, if briefly, his method and his prescription.

The thesis of Sociology is simple: Reduce all men to abstract digits for purposes of efficient handling and grouping. Only in terms of such a closed-system procedure can progress be made to appear definite, tangible, and therefore measurable. We are thinking of man's welfare, say its apostles, but in order to think to some progressive purpose we must conceive of him in the *mass*. Hence the neglect of the individual in the interest of an abstraction like the "slum problem" or the "Southern peasantry".

Let us rehearse the prescription itself. We must limit cotton production to ten to twenty bales a family, and these families must live in "the best cotton-growing areas". Naturally, this will result in the uprooting of from 500,000 to 750,000 tenants. They must be provided for by the state in the following manner: Establish "four or five thousand villages of 100 to 300 farm families within the next five years". The typical village shall include 100 to 300 houses of "the best modern design", with all the conveniences of plumbing and electricity and the luxuries of built-in bookcases and radios. There shall be schools, playgrounds, a library, a movie hall, and a postoffice. Title to all the business property in the village shall be held by the village itself. Applicants for store and office space shall rent from the village, after having passed an examination "based on high standards of service", those who make the highest grades of course receiving preference.

Each farmer in the village shall specialize in a few crops, in order that he may have leisure to learn enough to "take advantage of the best methods of scientific farming". Speculation will be made impossible by allowing these citizens to invest in nothing except government bonds. Payment for the cost of their homes involves merely an exercise in bookkeeping: since the wealth of America is internally owned, we have only to tax "those who own the debt incurred for building", and "pay them with the money collected from them" (*i.e.*, themselves).

The implications of this policy are the usual ones – regimentation, mass action, specialization, the busy-bee philosophy of work. Its major premise, one can easily see, rests upon a faith in swift evolution and education. We will take these now depraved tenant farmers (this "most neglected and hopeless peasantry in the Western World") and remove them to newly whitewashed model villages. We will transform their "environment". In the midst of that environment will stand the schoolhouse, symbol of universal emancipation. And then, abruptly, the miracle will happen: this hopeless peasantry will become alert. It will begin to read the latest farm improvement magazines. It will, presumably, invite the Smith-Hughes specialists to lecture in the school auditorium, tune in on the National Farm and Home Hour, listen on Sundays to the Philharmonic Symphony concert, join the Book of the Month Club, subscribe to the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and in general, when the day's work is done, retire to its four by twelve veranda to watch the old order fade out of the sky.

One wonders, upon seeing anew such a blatant faith in the radio and the schoolhouse, what the experience of the last sixty years has meant to Mr. Couch. It is the old wonder anyone feels who has taught for a few years in the state-supported colleges of the country — the wonder that anybody could longer have faith in the idea that all people are capable of any salvation worth talking about through the simple process of being exposed to the elements of that salvation. What happens, and we state it in profound sadness, is simply that the intellectual standards of the institutions of higher learning disappear, or fall so low as to become meaningless as standards. It is difficult to find an informed person who denies this, and we are talking here about education expounded under organized and reasonably efficient conditions, or of education, at any rate, attempted in no haphazard way, and attempted, moreover, with the "middle class" and not with the "peasantry" as material.

What we mean to suggest in this connection is that there exists one class of people which the sociologists — because of their major premise: faith in universal human improvement — have never been able to understand. This is the class sometimes referred to as the "po' whites". These people are poor indeed, and many of them are tenant-farmers. They live, as if by choice, in squalor and indolence. Before the sterner varieties of religion went out of fashion, it was customary to explain them by saying that they were depraved. We believe that, if Sociology is to mature, it must come first to the realization that this loosely defined but easily recognizable class is, generally, beyond salvation. The sociologists of the future, in other words, will have to make their truce with the Problem of Evil – as every other man has had to do, and every science, and every art.

What would probably happen with respect to this class, if sent in numbers to the model village, would be that the homes in such villages would, in many cases, be burned piecemeal by the "peasants" themselves for firewood, the rotating gardens by midsummer would be weed-ridden, the radios torn to pieces (no frightful loss), the bookcases tobacco-spattered, and the schoolhouse befouled. In other words, we believe that any plan of the sociologist is both sentimental and irresponsible if it fails to countenance the melancholy fact that there is an element in every population, in every society, which is essentially beyond salvation.

But the inadequacies of Mr. Couch's plan for the South are more definite than those already suggested, though again his inadequacies seem inherent in the very method of Sociology. Primarily, they are traceable to the utter blindness of the reformer to the social inheritance of the people he would reform. In the present case, this blindness is evident in two ways: It ignores the essential individualism of farmers everywhere; and it ignores the regional antipathy of the Southern farmer toward any way of life which demands co-operation in the interest of abstract good, or of an abstract union.

Yet it was this antipathy which in large measure provoked the War between the States: the unwillingness of the South to forsake its own way of life out of deference to a foreign way urged upon it allegedly for its moral betterment. With regard to the other element in this blindness, it appears to us either slyly, or unconsciously, in evidence because of a failure to appreciate in the farmer the last vestige of a stand of the individual against the mass, of man against society *in vacuo*. In brief, one particularly resents the proposal of Mr. Couch because it would disrupt the Southern inheritance and tradition.

But it is obvious that such disruption would in no way alarm the sociologist, and for the very good reason that disruption is his objective. In this respect, like Grady and Page, he *wants* it disrupted; he wants a *New* South, of "liberty and freedom", "growing every hour", expanding as the whole industrial system must expand on penalty of utter capitulation. It is not, precisely, an industrial South, to be sure, but it is, to say the least, a revamped or Sociological South – a South, that is, revamped with very little consideration for its established way of life.

II

The sociologists, as a matter of fact, have been lured by their own preconceptions into seeing only one portion of the Southern scene – the portion that supports their preconception. Largely indicative, we think, of conditions throughout the Southern states are those actually existing in one large farming area in Mississippi – the Delta counties. Perhaps a clear view of this section will disclose the startling information (startling to the sociologists, at least) that the tenant-farmers do not really need a general uplift programme at all.

In general, farms employing tenants in the Mississippi Delta may be divided into two classes: farms owned by non-resident landlords or corporations, and farms owned and operated by residents. This will serve as a general division, for these two types have distinct and perhaps characteristic methods of dealing with tenants.

Of course, there are exceptions to such a broad view: resident landlords in some instances have adopted the tactics of non-residents, and it may even be that non-resident landlords have adopted the methods characteristic of residents, though no examples of such adoption are immediately available. But the two general trends are so clearly marked that an observer who spends any time in the Delta really trying to see it (instead of looking at it in order to prove the thesis of its decadence, its injustice, or its lack of civilization) can hardly fail to be conscious of their existence.

Non-resident landlords, in the main, tend to be progressive, and they tend to adopt the "efficient" industrial methods which this progressivism implies. They bought farms in the Delta because it was profitable to hold real estate there as an investment; or, investing in the Delta as saw-mill owners and finding themselves left with farms after they had denuded the land of its timber, they cultivated these farms because the raising of cotton was a profitable business. Being interested in the raising of cotton as a product that might be profitably marketed, the non-resident landlords wanted, and still want, to raise just as much cotton as possible. To this end they have applied the progressive technique of modern industry in pursuing wealth through agriculture.

Let us look at one such plantation as it exists today. At the heart of the place stands a group of buildings connected with the main highway by a gravel road. There is a manager's house with hardwood floors and steam heat, electric lights, and modern plumbing; a plantation store, neatly painted and filled with canned goods brought by truck from the wholesale grocery store thirty miles away; an electric gin with a private siding for freight cars; a large modern barn for the mules (or a garage for the tractors). Around this group of buildings, which constitutes the main office of the establishment, lie the fields, neatly divided by well-kept roads down which the manager can drive his automobile on inspection tours without encountering too many bumps for his managerial comfort. Tenant houses dot the fields, very trim and efficient looking with their new coats of whitewash or paint. Behind each house stands a privy (probably constructed under the supervision of the county health service).

But once you have seen the privy, you have seen the outhouses and grounds of the tenant's home; for a garden – so wisdom runs here – would remove from use land that might be planted in cotton. Nor does the tenant have trees around his home. Of course everyone knows that trees, if allowed at tenant houses, will occasionally shade the ends of cotton rows nearby, stunting the growth of as many as two dozen plants! Barns are not needed, for the landlord owns all the mules – if he is still old-fashioned and inefficient enough to use them in preference to tractors; and he keeps them all at the big modern barn near the manager's house. Front yards at the tenant houses are small and generally unfenced: small because the landlord does not wish to sacrifice any of his land, unfenced because there are no wooded lands on the place from which to get fence-palings. The woods were all cleared years ago so that there might be no waste land on the plantation.

The financial arrangements existing between tenant and landlord on this plantation are simple. There is only one class of tenant – the share-cropper class. The landlord furnishes the land, the house, the mules, the implements, and the seed. The tenant furnishes his labour. The division of profits is on a half-and-half basis at the end of the year; that is, the tenant receives fifty per cent of the total value of all the crops he raises – minus the money due the landlord for food and clothing. Needless to say, the landlord makes a profit on the merchandise which he retails; and in addition to that he charges interest on the account, the rate of interest charged varying from six to twenty per cent.

This, then, is the condition in which many of the tenant-farmers in the South live – whites and Negroes alike. They are living on the soil, to be sure, but they are essentially industrial workers. The instruments of production are all controlled by the capitalist (the landlord); the labour is uniform and regular, unvarying as the work in a factory; the tenants are not attached to the soil by emotional ties; the whole system is efficient and impersonal. It is this side of the Southern situation which the sociologists have examined carefully – and this side only. Here it is that the sociologists have erred; for though this system of tenant farming in the South is widespread, it is not the only, nor the characteristic, system. There are other plantations in this same Mississippi Delta – in close proximity to the establishment just described – which are less "progressive" than this one, but which are more truly representative of the South.

On these plantations one finds sometimes that the same family of tenants has occupied the same home for twenty or thirty or even for seventy-five years – two or three generations perhaps inhabiting the same house. One finds gardens from which the tenants gather their own vegetables, and fruit trees from which they pull their own fruit for immediate consumption and for canning purposes. One finds cow-lots, and pig-pens, and barns filled with corn – for here numerous families own their own mules and their own implements. And there are, almost uniformly, shade trees about – trees which the tenants have planted with their own hands and watched grow, trees under which several generations of tenant children have played. Fences, built from boards riven on the place, surround the yards. Houses have grown with the families, room after room being added as maturing groups required larger quarters for growing children or for newly married progeny.

These are the true "agrarian" establishments, run by men who live on the land and love it and who derive their whole sustenance from it. Here the houses may not be neatly painted; but the whole tone of tenant-farming is less strident than it is on the places devoted to the manufacture of cotton. Labour is varied here. Crops are diversified. The aim is not to make enormous profits, but to induce the land to give up its riches that men may live and work and be happy.

Here, as on the plantations of the industrial type, capital-labour arrangements are simple. But they are of two types. Some tenants work under the share-cropper system, with the same fifty-fifty division of profits that prevails on the non-agrarian establishments. But much less retail merchandise business is done on the real agrarian plantations. Growing most of their food at home, preserving meat and canning vegetables for the winter months, the tenants have little to buy from the plantation store. Sugar must be purchased, of course, and coffee, snuff, tobacco, and perhaps a little medicine; but that is all. The era of specialization has not yet penetrated these plantations, has not yet affected these tenants. Thus, here, the "share-cropper" contract is shorn of its greatest evils: monotony of employment, expensive supplies bought at high interest rates, and – most important of all – dependence on the unpredictable price fluctuations of a single crop.

The second type of landlord-tenant arrangement offers even greater opportunity for the tenant. The renter system, as it is called, requires that the tenant furnish his own mules, plows, seed, and tools; the planter furnishes the house and the land for crops and gardens. At the end of the year, the settlement brings to the tenant three-fourths of all the cotton and two-thirds of all the corn he raises. Of course, he keeps his vegetables for his own table.

The advantages of such a system are obvious. Assume that a tenant, with the status of a share-cropper, moves to an agrarian plantation of this nature. Granting normal economic conditions, it is comparatively easy, in a few years, for one who is frugal and ambitious to acquire both farm animals and implements, since, living at home, he has little other use for whatever profit he may make on his cotton crop. Of course, there is always the chance that he will be induced by the Ford agent at the county seat to buy an automobile instead of a mule, but we will grant the tenant the courage of his purpose.

After he has bought his mules and implements, the share-cropper becomes a renter. And from this condition he may rise into the land-owning class without any monumental ability. He may become, in other words, an independent small farmer. Most planters are always willing to sell uncleared land on a time-payment plan, and the tenant is thus enabled to buy and clear his own land while he is still a renter. Moreover, there is an unwritten rule in the Delta that tenants receive three years' free use of all land they clear; this tradition, still generally prevalent, offers another opportunity to the tenant farmer to improve his condition. While he is a renter, he can clear his own land, cultivate it for three years rent free, then use the profit from his crop on the land to make the first payment toward buying it.

Under this system, whether the tenant becomes an independent farmer or remains in that state of "servitude" so much lamented by the sociologists becomes a matter of his individual initiative. Here again the sociologists have been negligent, for they have failed to take into account the fact of individual differences. They fail to see any particularity in tenant farmers; their tenant farmers, for reasons already mentioned, become mere digits in a generalized class. Such tenants are pictured always as passionately ambitious but now enslaved people, who, once liberated, will become ideal citizens, prosperous and independent.

To summarize: there are two types of planters to be found in the Mississippi Delta. On the one hand there is the industrial type, which is represented by the non-resident land-owner or distant company. This type is interested in manufacturing cotton by industrialist methods for profit, is characterized by impersonal management, by capitalist control of all instruments of production, by specialization and efficiency. The result of such an economic philosophy is the share-cropper system. On the other hand there is the truly agrarian type, represented by the resident farmer personally concerned with making a living rather than with making a large profit. This type is characterized by an attachment to the soil as a means toward a whole life for the planter and the tenants, by an interest in diversification, and by the opportunity offered tenants to become landowners themselves.

III

So far in this objective consideration of the two types of tenant-farming in the Mississippi Delta we have assumed normal economic conditions. We have assumed a fair price for cotton, and moderate taxes — the conditions that a farmer may reasonably expect. But in the last few years these conditions have been decidedly lacking for the Southern farmer. A high protective tariff and the overproduction of cotton (brought on in part by the tariff-bred discouragement of foreign trade, and in part by the efforts of industrialist-minded farmers to get ahead by raising more cotton than their neighbours) have lowered the cotton price. And, coincident with the lowering of the cotton price, high taxes to pay for "progressive" public improvements have caused the farmer to plant more and more cotton in order to pay his obligations to the state and county. As a result the farmer has tended to abandon diversification, and his product has glutted an already surfeited market.

Since this matter of taxation affects the condition of the tenant farmer (by tending to lead more and more planters to adopt specialized methods of production for profit) it may be well to go into the problem somewhat further. The Delta counties are of two classes, "progressive" and "non-progressive". In the "progressive" counties, even during years when the price of cotton was at its lowest, taxes on farm lands sometimes ran as high as three dollars per acre — and this on land from which the highest profit received during these years was four dollars an acre. To objectify the matter: the owner of a thousand-acre plantation (say 700 acres in cultivation and 300 acres of woodland) might make as much as $4,000 per year above his domestic expenses. Of that amount he paid $3,000 for taxes. His total profit, then, was $1,000. And this in one of the richest farming areas in the world!

But not all Delta counties have taxes as high as this one. In some of the "non-progressive" counties (especially counties lying partly in the hills and partly in the Delta) taxes run as low as fifty or sixty cents per acre. Now just what makes the difference? Exactly this: some of the Delta counties, afflicted with the ideal of "Progress", have invested heavily in roads and public buildings, drainage ditches, and so forth;

other counties have had the good sense to go slowly and to look carefully before undertaking to emulate their more bustling neighbours. Of course, improvements are desirable things: they are the marks of opulence and expansiveness; and, if they be not too crass and spectacular, they aid in assuring the stability of a culture — witness the Egyptian Pyramids, the Greek Parthenon, the Roman Colosseum. But when these improvements must be made to the detriment, even to the destruction, of the most important and most stable enterprise and way of life existing in a locality, it is plain that their desirability becomes questionable, to say the kindest possible thing about them. And in the high-tax counties, many farmers have been ruined because they could not make enough money from their farms (even by industrialist methods) to pay the exorbitant taxes necessitated by public improvements.

The proportion of town residents to country residents affects the stand taken by the county in these matters, since migratory clerks and wage-workers are entitled to vote on matters of public expenditure—matters in which they are notoriously extravagant. The amount of industrial enterprise in the county is also an important factor, since it affects the number of rootless voters, most of whom may be dominated politically by their employers. And one must always consider the proportion of non-resident establishments to resident establishments, since the powerful non-residential planters are eager for public improvements that raise the salability of their land. New and "unimproved" land is always available at low prices; and no attachments of sentiment bind the investors to the land they have. They are land speculators, and as such they are willing to sacrifice, for profit, the interests of the stable residents. Hence their co-operation with the urban voters, who are striving through public improvements to lure industrial enterprise (with its prospective markets for merchandise) into the county.

This discussion may seem foreign to a study of the tenant-farmer, but as a matter of fact it affects him vitally. The principle here at stake determines whether he may ever rise from the tenant-farmer status and become a land-holder himself. When the planter is forced to increase his acreage and raise cotton for profit in order to pay taxes, the result is that the tenant can have less and less garden room, that he can raise less corn and vegetables. Thus it increases his reliance upon "store-bought" supplies and reduces the comparative economic independence that epitomizes his only chance of advancement.

High taxes, moreover, are fatal to the small farmer who has risen already from the tenant-farmer class, forcing him back toward the state of what the sociologists are pleased to call "servitude". As taxes increase he, like the planter, is obliged to withdraw more and more land from subsistence farming. And as he increases his cotton crop (on a falling market) he loses his independence because he must purchase his supplies on a domestic market artificially protected by tariff laws. Thus he stands a good chance either of losing his place to the state for non-payment of taxes, or of losing it to a bank from which he has borrowed the money necessary for the exclusive production of cotton.

In one of the highly-taxed counties of the Delta, for instance, there were within two miles ten small land owners – Negroes who have risen from the tenant-farmer class. Until the year 1930 these Negroes were independent. They owned land, comfortable homes, cattle, farm implements, and food: sometimes they owned luxuries – automobiles, clothes miraculously fine for the neighbourhood. In short, they were human beings with a way of life – a way which has been one of peace and solidity for centuries. They were good citizens, worthy of respect and consideration. Today five of these Negroes have lost their farms (either to the state or to a bank); the others are in imminent danger of being dispossessed, in spite of the activities of the various Federal farm-relief agencies.

In this same county there is a settlement of white farmers, each owning fifty or a hundred acres of land. Some of them have migrated from the North; others have risen from the tenant-farmer class. They, too, have found a way of life. But they, also, like the Negroes at the other end of the county, have been harried by rising taxes and falling cotton prices until they are now almost hopelessly in debt, and are faced with imminent foreclosure and economic retardation. Here is no matter for sociologists and reformers; it is a matter calling for political action on the part of a united farming population and calling for a new and more careful consideration of values on the part of those sociologists, North and South, who talk of Progress and Culture in terms of roads and courthouses, radios, and the circulation of a daily newspaper.

IV

It appears, then, that the tenant-farmer system in the South is most vicious on plantations run under industrial methods and that it is least vicious under a truly agrarian régime – a régime in which planters and tenants share alike a live-at-home programme and in which the tenants of ability have ample opportunity to become land-holders themselves. It appears, again, that the chief dangers menacing the agrarian way of life in the South are high taxes, high tariff, the gospel of Progress, and industrialist methods in agriculture.

The authors of this paper are not concerned here with the advocacy of a plan of their own: their interest has been, rather, in offering to the serious reader a picture of the rural South, one side of which the Sociologist has studiously ignored. We are unwilling to leave the subject, however, without addressing certain comments to whatever future plan-makers may arise. In other words – as T. S. Eliot says of future books on Shakespeare – we wish to "disinfect" these forthcoming plans, by inviting the solicitous, when drafting them, to respect the following principles.

The first is that the plan proposed should indicate an awareness of the nature of the farmer who is being planned for, and of the Southern way of life. Its author, to put the point differently, should bear in mind that the fact of an experiment's having seemingly worked in Italy or Russia, or the hope of its working in the Middle West, is scarcely warrant for a jocund faith in its being workable in the South. He should remember, again, that if his plan contemplates the making over of all tenants into smoothly and logically functioning efficient units, it will fail.

The second is that the plan-maker be less of a humanitarian, that he think less of the salvation of the hopeless "peasant" and more of the salvation of the far from hopeless "yeoman".

The third is that the plan-maker realize that the predicament of this yeoman, or ambitious tenant, is due primarily, not to the fact that he is a fool, wallowing in misfortune because of a sullen unwillingness to rotate his crops, but rather to the fact that he is the victim of a government that almost constantly during the past seventy years has been run in the interest of the industrial power. To phrase the matter another way, we invite the plan-maker to face the political problem as it concerns the permanent reshaping of the national government in such fashion as will make it capable of a balanced functioning.

The fourth is that the "planner" be less of a theorist with respect to the time limit for making his proposal effective. Mr. Couch wants the villages constructed within "the next five years". The tenants will, apparently, be transported to the villages then, willy-nilly. Yet it is imaginable that there are many tenants who feel no little attachment to their homes and states, who would perhaps – so unreasonable can this attachment become – prefer living in poverty upon a land they know to living in uncertain opulence in a strange land of plenty. This is not romanticizing the matter at all, for the sense of local attachment is strong in everyone except intellectuals. If, therefore, Mr. Couch's scheme of salvation, or any scheme of salvation, is to be effective, it must contemplate a much slower fulfillment, it must pace itself by the halting strides of human nature.

If these principles, among others, are overlooked, we are afraid that there are many of us who will be driven to contemplate the enunciation of future plans as gathering evidence of what Dr. Owsley might term the Fourth, or Sociological, Crusade against the South — the forces of Abolition, Reconstruction, and Communism, rolled together into one blinding light, to illumine forever and at any cost our dark satanic hills.

An Experiment in Classicism

Part II

LEWIS MORTON

IN THE case of *Le Viol de Lucrèce*, the situation is different. Here it is not a question of expanding and dramatizing a story meagre in events and action. There is action in plenty, and it speaks for itself. The playwright's sole concern is to see that it speaks aright. Here, furthermore, there is a precedent version, and it is from a comparison of the play with Shakespeare's poem, on which, avowedly, it is based, that its inherent classicism is thrown into boldest relief. I shall attempt, therefore, merely to outline the respects in which I conceive Obey's play to diverge from Shakespeare's treatment. By far the most crucial of these is his introduction of a definite moral element into what Shakespeare leaves a mere romantic tale. Of this there can be no doubt, and lest the incidental changes fail to register, he pauses between the climax and the catastrophe to posit the problem, through the agency of his chorus, squarely and explicitly. In fact, as I shall try to show, Obey has rewoven the whole fabric of the plot upon the rigid woof of history and duty and has approached, at least on the side of ultimate significance, the principles and standards of Aristotelian tragedy.

It will be noticed that in the preceding paragraph I have used the word "history" as a synonym for "morality" and "duty", and it is an identification which I feel can be quite adequately justified. For whereas the Greeks were able to see beyond the immediate bounds of city-state and to postulate a universal moral order, the Romans could conceive of morality in terms only of national destiny. Rome, to them, was the end to which all else subserved, and patriotism was the highest form of duty. It is on this assumption that Obey has based his interpretation of the *Rape of Lucrece*. The play is, in fact, pervaded with the spirit of history. Indeed the Récitant is himself a personification, practically, of Titus Livy. And what is true of the tone and atmosphere generally is true alike of the plot and action. Instead of merely telling a story, the play asserts and vindicates a principle.

The difference between the two treatments is apparent at the very outset. In the brief prologue which is the analogue to Shakespeare's "argument", Obey, after the exposition of the essential facts, proceeds to make Lucrèce the symbol of Rome itself. Junius Brutus in the final speech of the episode salutes Lucrèce as "la plus belle parure de Rome". Similarly the Récitante in the speech that opens Act I concludes, after a description of the peace and the virtue of Collatin's household: "Il est dix heures du soir, et tout va bien dans la meilleure maison de Rome." Here, too, is a minor but by no means negligible difference. Whereas Shakespeare locates the scene of the tragedy at Collatium, Obey with careful consistency changes it to Rome. These may seem insignificant details, but they tend nevertheless to associate Lucrèce with Rome in the minds of the audience and to prepare the way for a dénouement in which Tarquin's crime against Lucrèce is made a symbol of his disloyalty to the state and thus the instrument of his deposition and death.

The next divergence is somewhat less subtle. It concerns the motives for Tarquin's crime, a vital aspect of the tragedy from the standpoint of its moral import. If they are, as Shakespeare makes them out, merely the product of a temporary lust, then his act itself assumes the character of a stroke of fate, as unpredictable as a thunderbolt, and, in the cosmic sense, as void of meaning. If, on the other hand, his lust for Lucrèce is integrated with his whole character, if it is made the sign of a fatal egotism which will make him a tyrannic and despotic ruler, then his act becomes the type and figure of his attitude toward Rome, "the common mother of us all". It is in this light that Obey views the crime. And in so doing he shifts the emphasis of the play from the romantic interest in the personal for its own sake to what I think I am right in calling a classical regard for the typical, the general, the universal.

In handling Lucrèce's reception of Tarquin, Obey makes another departure from his model. Shakespeare has taken, again, the personal tack: Lucrece, he says, permits Tarquin to spend the night in her house because she is innocent and unsophisticated. "Birds never limed no secret bushes fear." This is plausible and natural enough, but Obey is not content with it. Instead he prefers to make the calamity itself a direct result of a seemingly noble act. In the play Lucrèce's maidservants question the propriety of receiving Tarquin, but Obey vindicates her in the name of Roman hospitality. In other words, Lucrèce works her own undoing in a praiseworthy attempt to obey the Lares and Penates.

Of a piece with Shakespeare's treatment of Tarquin's motives is his representation of Tarquin's listless wrestle with temptation. Here, too, the struggle is personal. Tarquin debates the purely private issue of fleshly gratification versus heraldic dishonour, and he worries far more about the possible blot on his scutcheon than about any ethical principles. In this instance, as in his later treatment of Lucrèce's struggle before she decides to kill herself, Obey begins with the Shakespearean tenets. But he goes further. Here his final appeal, voiced by the Récitant, is to Tarquin the man, to his inner self, his sense of duty and of right:

> "A qui donc se fierait-on si l'on ne pouvait plus se fier à soi-même? Quel dévouement attendrait-on d'un étranger si soi-même on se détruisait? . . . Soi-même! Quelle force, quelle confiance, et quelle certitude il doit y avoir dans ce mot-là!"

Surely this is a fairly close approach to a classic principle of ethics.

I come now to the real crux of the whole matter, Lucrèce's resolution to commit suicide, after the crime. In the play this incident forms the keystone of the whole carefully constructed plot. In the poem it throws into startling relief Shakespeare's failure to understand the point at issue. In both versions Lucrèce's immediate reaction to the crime is one of numb, uncomprehending anguish. Then, as the awful import of the deed begins to penetrate her consciousness, she casts about her for some explanation. Why should *she* have been subjected to this foul assault? What has she done to deserve it? What can be the nature of a universe that will permit such things to happen? Shakespeare is unable to answer. He can only assert that man is the creature of chance, of blind, unreasoning circumstance. In the words of Lucrece,

"O Opportunity, thy guilt is great!
'Tis thou that executest the traitor's treason;
Thou set'st the wolf where he the lamb may get. . . ."

She continues in this vein for some hundreds of lines, varying the theme with curses of Tarquin and of Time. But her tirades do nothing to assuage her grief.

"In vain I spurn at my confirmed despite;
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
The remedy indeed to do me good
Is to let forth my foul defiled blood."

So she takes her resolution, but, humanly enough, having once taken it, she recoils and tries to find another way out. And it is here that Shakespeare reveals his inability to sympathize with the classic point of view. He knows Lucrece must die; that was the way the story went. But he does not realize that she must die in order that Rome may live, that Tarquin may be killed and the country delivered from his tyranny. Consequently he is forced to invent an argument that will issue in her death, and he does it entirely in the spirit of mediaeval Christianity. Her body, she says, is the temple of her soul, and since it has been "battered by the enemy", there is no remedy but to kill it outright. This apparently was a satisfactory solution enough as far as Shakespeare was concerned, but his troubles did not end there. There was another event in his source which his romantic treatment left unexplained. Lucrece, instead of killing herself at once, wrote to Collatine and called him home from the siege in order that he might witness her death. It need hardly be pointed out that the true explanation of this circumstance is exactly the same as that of her death itself. The historical element in the story demanded it. If she had failed to publish Tarquin's guilt he would have been left free to prey upon the Roman state as he had preyed on her. But Shakespeare is unaware of any such contingency. And so he explains this circumstance, as well, on personal grounds. Lucrece must wait and tell Collatine in order that he may wreak an entirely personal vengeance upon her assailant.

Nothing more need be said about Shakespeare's treatment of the theme. It remains only to compare with it Obey's presentation of Lucrèce's struggle and resolution. As in the case of Tarquin's debate, he follows Shakespeare as far as Shakespeare goes. But he is not content to let the thing rest there. Rather he asserts and vindicates historical morality through the person of the Récitant:

> "Voilà Rome en état d'histoire. La grande Rome est en histoire. . . . Quel haut destin d'être de Rome! Partout où l'on met le pied, on marche, pour ainsi dire, sur un pas historique!"

To this the Récitante can only answer: "Une gentille dame va mourir." There ensues a controversy between the Récitant and the Récitante in which the latter repeatedly voices the personal, Shakespearean point of view, only to be sternly put down by the Récitant. The whole argument is crystallized in their respective attitudes toward the mob who come to Lucrèce's house to find out what has happened. To the Récitante these are merely "Curieuses! . . . Scandaleuses!" But the Récitant replies with a speech that points the moral of the play:

> "Ce n'est point la curiosité qui les a poussés jusqu'ici. Encore moins le goût du scandale. C'est une grande soif de justice, d'ordre, d'honnêteté: cette grande soif romaine qui ouvre toutes les bouches romaines à certaines heures arides de l'histoire romaine."

This order, this justice, this decency Tarquin has violated, and the whole play is in reality a reassertion of their validity and worth.

Obey's treatment of Lucrèce's resolution to die is also in the classic rather than the romantic manner. True, he does not go so far as to make her conscious that she is buying Rome's life with her own, but he does motivate her resolution by considerations not of Christian casuistry but of Roman morality. Granted the Roman moral code, her problem was relatively simple. She could either live in silent shame and let Tarquin laugh in secret, or she could divulge the crime. But if she did the latter she would have to kill herself as well, because in that way only could she stifle permanently gossip and whispered scandal. The only answer, therefore, was to die. And so, with a full perception of the issue involved, she goes to her death strongly and silently with all the clear-eyed courage of a true Roman. All this Obey brings out in the speech he gives her after her resolution is taken:

> "O Rome! . . . Légende! Histoire! Langue! Mesure! Ame romaine! Quel entraînement vous nous donnez au

malheur! Je n'ai pas dormi, j'ai souffert, j'ai pleuré toutes les larmes de mon corps et pourtant, je me sens forte et mon coeur bat régulièrement. . . .

"Un jour en me promenant en barque devant Baïes, j'ai vu au fond de l'eau une statue de Minerve, seul vestige d'un navire qui s'abîma, il y a un siècle. . . . Il faut que j'aie, jusqu'à la fin, les yeux fixés sur cette statue de marbre blanc, assise, comme la mère du silence, parmi les herbes sous-marine."

One final point remains, the problem of catharsis. The Shakespearean interpretation is as void of any real justification of the moral order as Mr. Prosser Hall Frye has shown his great tragedies to be. Tarquin is hounded down and killed, to be sure, but the "gentille dame" is dead, and in her the plot was entirely bound up. In the play, on the other hand, Obey has kept his attention from the very beginning focussed on the historical, and therefore the moral, implications, which transcend the mere personal tragedy. If that is the case, then the *dénouement* provides an effective catharsis. True, Lucrèce is dead, but Rome lives – lives, in fact, because Lucrèce has died. And as the curtain is rung down, not on the heaped up bodies of a *Hamlet* or a *Lear*, but on the crowd's enthusiastic cries of "Rome! Rome! Rome!" the feelings of the audience are relieved, the tragic qualm is allayed, and the catharsis is complete. Only the Récitant and the Récitante, as they steal across the stage, are permitted to voice one last, half-stifled murmur of tenderness and pity:

Récitante: Pauvre oiseau! . . . Pauvre oiseau! . . .
Récitant: Pauvre biche égorgée! . . .

These, then, are the facts about André Obey and La Compagnie des Quinze — facts which render them worthy of the careful consideration of all those who have any real concern for the American theatre. A company of actors thoroughly trained in the technique of their art, with a theory of the drama which defies the cinema, working in direct collaboration with a competent playwright, they have produced at least two plays which seem to breathe, freshly and spontaneously, each in its own fashion, a classic spirit. I wish in conclusion only to reiterate what I think is the most significant aspect of their work, namely that in seeking to remedy the outstanding evils of the realistic approach in drama they have gone back to the timeless principles of great dramatic art. It may not therefore be too much to say that they have found the only medicine that can restore the drama to its former vigour and can make of it the instrument it ought to be for great and noble thoughts.

REVIEWS

The First Agrarian Economist*

WHAT the professional economists will say about Mr. Troy J. Cauley's *Agrarianism: A Program for Farmers* I do not know. Very likely they will retort with rows of ciphers, as usual, and emit incredulous graphs and charts in the best Sunday manner of the New York *Times*. Yet it is just possible that they may not. For this new supporter of agrarianism is not, like some of its other advocates, under suspicion of having written poetry or biography or literary criticism. No, Mr. Cauley is himself a member of their lodge, and though they may be inclined to view him as an erring brother, he is at least a brother, who knows all the mystic signs, signals, passwords, and catchwords. In brief, he is a professional economist himself — Professor of Economics at the Georgia School of Technology — and, so far as I know, the first American economist to come forth with anything like a well-ordered analysis and defense of the economics of agrarianism. If the orthodox economists, whether of the old or the new schools, want to argue Mr. Cauley down, they will have to be quick about it. While they were engaged in mystic contemplation of the economy of abundance, he has stolen a march on them and gone miles ahead.

The layman, who has no professional pride to swallow, ought to welcome Mr. Cauley's book and take it seriously, no matter what his predispositions may be. It is a sensible, even-tempered book, which says in outline about all that can be briefly said about the comparative merits and defects of agrarianism and other systems. It has the weakness, of course, of being only an outline; but the outline is firm, and capable of much extension and filling-out. Furthermore, it gains enormously because Mr. Cauley differs from his colleagues in attributing no great measure of infallibility to his chosen science. In fact, he goes so far as to imply, in his preface, that economics is not a science at all, for he says:

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* AGRARIANISM: A Program for Farmers *by Troy J. Cauley* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. $1.50).

> This work falls into the general field of economics and more particularly into that of agricultural economics; but it is not, I feel quite sure, scientific in nature. It is more nearly in the nature of an exhortation. Let it be read as such.

Such a statement marks Mr. Cauley as a most unusual economist. And indeed he is. In his opening chapter he posits, as the foundation of economics, "certain natural resources, a body of technical knowledge as to how to use them, and a complex of ideals or habits of thought as to what is desirable in the utilization of these factors". And he says: "On the whole, the third of these items . . . is the most important. . . . It is clear that what constitutes a valuable resource or a useful bit of technique depends upon the result sought. This is to say in effect: First tell me what your objectives are, and then I can tell you what your resources are." In thus reducing economics to the place of instrument and elevating man's social will to first place, Mr. Cauley differs profoundly from most of the American economists, professional and amateur, that have been leading the procession. They cannot look at an oak tree without thinking of it as lumber, or at a river without wanting to build a power dam. But Mr. Cauley is ready to grant that oak tree and river may be viewed with other than such purely calculating and exploitative desires.

That concession, or rather that fundamental assumption, leads naturally to his refreshingly unorthodox approach to Capitalism and Socialism and their economic and social results. Under Capitalism, property has assumed more and more attenuated forms, until finally it has become simply money and credit, and these have carried business power. But money and credit depend upon a price system, which in turn depends upon relative scarcity of commodities; and this scarcity has been destroyed by machinery. Present efforts are directed (so far as the obstacle of the Supreme Court can be hurdled) at producing artificial scarcity; but a money economy still prevails.

So far, Mr. Cauley is orthodox enough. He becomes unorthodox when he begins to discuss agriculture. Agriculture, he says, is "a relic of the pre-capitalistic era". Its object is not pecuniary gain, or not merely that; it is carried on, to a considerable degree, "for the purpose of *making a living*", in the literal, not the derived pecuniary sense. But agriculture has nevertheless been diverted, to a large degree, into merely pecuniary, or business, motives. And what is the result? "As a producer of goods, agriculture in this country may be accounted a success; but as a business, it is a distinct failure, and to a very large extent its success in production is responsible for its failure as a business."

Next Mr. Cauley reviews the remedies for the plight of agriculture as set forth by capitalistic and socialistic doctors. Mr. Bernard Ostrolenk, who represents the orthodox capitalistic ideology in his book *The Surplus Farmer*, advocates "the turning back of unprofitable land and the ridding of agriculture of incompetent producers by permitting the free play of the weeding process of price". That is, the "sub-marginal" farmer must go, or be ejected by the process known in business as "bankruptcy". But bankruptcy on the farm does not operate like bankruptcy in business. The very "efficient", commercial farmer works on a money basis. He can go bankrupt, and has gone bankrupt in a most thoroughgoing way during the depression; but this is the kind of farmer that Mr. Ostrolenk does not want to see "weeded out". The other kind of farmer, only more or less "efficient", is, as Mr. John Crowe Ransom has pointed out, an amphibian creature, partly in and partly out of the money economy. He does not go bankrupt. He simply lowers his scale of living and hangs on. What then is a "sub-marginal" farmer? When hard times come, certainly it is not the little fellow who tightens his belt and simply cannot be liquidated. What would have happened in 1929 if the United States had not had a great number of such farmers? Where would the unemployed of the "factory farms" have gone for refuge?

As for the socialist doctors, they propose to abolish the price system. But the objections to the extreme paternalism thus made necessary are exactly what Mr. Hilaire Belloc has set forth. Mr. Cauley takes Belloc's view of the Servile State. "Probably the only thing worse than losing one's job," says Mr. Cauley, "is not being able to lose one's job."

But we need accept neither of these hard choices. "Agrarianism is a third possibility — agrarianism as an economic system in which agriculture is the chief but not the sole method of making a living, and in which people generally *own* sufficient property to ensure them a decent living and the basis for a satisfying degree of economic freedom."

The rest of the book is devoted to a development of the agrarian economy. Such an economy is desirable first of all because of its inherent merits, which Mr. Cauley describes, with special reference to the South as the section least deeply committed to commercialized agriculture. Among the merits are: wide diffusion of property; fewer *material* wants; greater sociability; and in general "a much greater degree of economic and social stability than in an urban and industrial community". And what if such an economy produces "backwardness"? Mr. Cauley's answer is that it evidently produces happiness. He quotes the statistics gathered by the *American Mercury* to show that the rate of suicide in the Southern states is lower than in the industrial sections. And the rate of insanity is lower, too.

But, not to draw an idealized picture, Mr. Cauley admits that agrarianism presents some defects. He is not, like Mr. Rexford G. Tugwell and the Communists, an out-and-out perfectionist. He devotes a chapter to the defects. Besides, there is the obvious fact that agrarianism has suffered a considerable decline, for reasons which have been pounced upon by pro-industrialists as proving its final extinction. Mr.

Cauley does not believe the decline has reached such a point, but the contrary. His final chapter offers suggestions for the restoration of agrarianism.

These are very specific. Granting that the farmer, as things go nowadays, cannot well escape completely the need of money, he turns his attention to plans for reducing his money needs. He proposes to do this by revising the prevailing systems of taxation, first of all, substituting for the general property tax, which now favours business and penalizes the farmer, a graduated property tax, which would exempt all farm property of a single owner up to $5,000, and would progress upward like the Federal income tax. He also thinks that a general sales tax, though regressive in its effects, will do the small farmer no harm and is a practical "transitional measure". He favours a reduction of tariffs, or at least a revision of them so as not to discriminate against the farmer. And though he condemns borrowing as being against agrarian economics, he favours the present efforts of the Federal government toward mortgage relief. But he notes that "improved credit facilities will not in themselves solve the problem". . . . "You can't borrow yourself out of debt." . . . "A true agrarian economy will not be characterized by extensive indebtedness on the part of farmers." Last, and most important of all, he would favour every practical step that might be taken towards increasing farm ownership. To this end he proposes the special taxation of absentee landlords on a graduated scale that would eventually drive out of business most large landholders, non-operators, and non-residents; and he advocates concessions to tenants that will lead to greater permanency of tenure: for example, a good tenant, who improves the land and his house, will not be subject to summary eviction but will enjoy a condition approximating ownership.

Can it be done? Yes, if we do not surrender to economic determinism. "It can be done", says Mr. Cauley, "just as surely as the present generally prevailing philosophy of money-making and progress was built up by essentially the same technique during the past century or so. But we must be at it if the present generation is to figure in the change."

Mr. Cauley's proposals are not so sweeping, or at all points so drastic, as the programme outlined by Mr. Frank L. Owsley, in his recent article in THE AMERICAN REVIEW, "The Pillars of Agrarianism". What he has to say is nevertheless so clear and so practical that it ought to carry much conviction to those whose minds are open to conviction. His is the spirit that says Yes to a difficult task. His book is an addition, of the first importance, to what I might call the literature of conservative revolution. Its appearance at this time helps to strengthen the impression that we are entering a time, like that prior to the French Revolution, when ideas beget ideas and, so multiplying, at last carry all before them.

DONALD DAVIDSON

The Philosophy of Scientists*

THE scope of this book is far wider than its title seems to suggest. Instead of being an *apologia pro philosophia mea*, a personal account of the manner in which a certain individual biologist looks upon life and its problems, it proposes to set forth, from the viewpoint of the sciences and particularly from that of biology and psychology, the conclusions which, in the author's opinion, we can draw from modern philosophy on the fundamental problems which agitate the human mind. Especially in the final chapter Professor Haldane is at pains to show that "religion is no mere revelation from without, but enters into the whole of our experience as the direct revelation in it of God".

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* THE PHILOSOPHY OF A BIOLOGIST *by J. S. Haldane* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 155 pp. $2.50).

His premises are mainly three. First, philosophical ideas are essentially bound up with ideas applied in all branches of knowledge, and progress in philosophy implies progress in these branches and vice versa. Second, with the rapid development of physical science and physical conceptions in the time of Galileo and his scientific successors, contradicting many accepted theological ideas, the need arose for a more adequate philosophy. Third, this need took its first systematic form in the writing of Descartes, to whom the central problem of philosophy was the manner in which the universe, as apparently revealed by the new physical science, is related to the mind or soul, as apparently revealed in the facts of conscious behaviour. In other words, the development of physical science gave rise to modern philosophy in European and American civilization, and it is with this philosophy that the author is exclusively concerned.

Thus, rejecting at one fell swoop the Greeks and the scholastics and more than twenty centuries of systematic human thought, he makes the philosophy of Descartes (1596-1650) his starting-point. That philosophy was based on an illogical dualism, he believes, a vicious separation of the spiritual world from the physical world, without any effort to solve the problem of how these two worlds entered into communication with each other. The historical result was a bifurcation. On the one hand we had the philosophy of materialism which has dominated science almost down to our own day. On the other hand we have had the pantheism of Spinoza (1632-1677) and the gradual retreat from reality along the line indicated by the names of Locke (1632-1704), Berkeley (1685-1753), and Hume (1711-1776). While one Cartesian offshoot, materialism, grew lustily in the laboratories of the scientists, the other quickly sickened till it finally died in the scepticism of David Hume.

At this stage Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) came upon the scene with his hypothesis that human reason creates the ordered universe out of the raw stuff of sensation. Thus there are for Kant two worlds, a world of perception which appears as a physically interpretable universe and a world of real existence "which, however, it is impossible to perceive".

> The perceived universe was no longer, as it was for Descartes, and appears still to be for uncritical thought, a universe independent of perception of it and therefore outside of mind. [It was] not a world independent of mind as Descartes assumed, but a world into the constitution of which mind enters at every point.

Obviously this Kantian hypothesis gives Professor Haldane his germinal thought in the evolution of his philosophy. With brief references to Fichte (1797-1879), Schelling (1775-1854), and Hegel (1770-

1831) he expounds the philosophers' rejection of Kant's distinction between his two worlds. "The unifying element of which Kant had pointed out the existence as mind in his phenomenal world must be inherent in all that is real, so that it is the expression of one Absolute Being." Thus we arrive at the philosophy so prevalent today in England and America, the philosophy of post-Kantian and post-Hegelian idealism. The universe, from this viewpoint, is a great coherent system of mind.

While the post-Cartesian thinkers were building up this philosophy of idealism the post-Cartesian physicists were far from idle, and it seems to be the main purpose of Haldane's book to show how at long last the scientific world, in the person of Einstein, has joined hands with the philosophic world as represented by thinkers like Green and Bradley. No longer is there an abyss between a material world and a spiritual world, it seems. No longer is there an unbridgeable gap between science and philosophy. Science, in the view expressed in this book, is coming to a new kind of philosophic realism; it is learning to deal with the facts that present themselves in our minds as prior to the impinging phenomena that come upon us from without, and thus it is beginning to see what philosophic idealism saw long ago, namely, that we and the universe-outside-as-we-perceive-it are a unity.

From this point onwards Professor Haldane goes somewhat beyond his masters Green and Bradley. He sees all of us as individual personalities, each with his own universe of perceived experience, but he sees us also as caught up in an all-embracing Personality, which he calls God. "The idea of God as a being apart from other individual personalities is not in accordance with religious experience. For religion God is actually present everywhere, was and will be at all times, and our universe is the progressive manifestation of God." Our recognition of duty, truth, beauty is in every case a manifestation of the all-embracing Personality of God. Our very dreams of immortality are such a manifestation, for "we ourselves are partakers, however imperfectly, in divine personality and in this respect immortal, [and] mere individual immortality ceases to have its former significance".

The book, therefore, is indicative of one of the trends of modern thought. Haldane's All-Embracing Personality can be assigned a place in our modern pantheon of cosmic gods alongside of Einstein's Cosmic Order, Jeans's Cosmic Mathematician, Mather's Cosmic Energy, Montague's Cosmic Mind, Wieman's Integrating Process of the Universe, and many others. It is emphatically a product of the modern philosophy of idealism and derives directly from the Cartesian divorce from reality.

Its whole-hearted pantheism is obvious in its identification of the name of God with the concept of universal mind and its further identification of the being of God with the system of the universe as a whole. Again and again the author returns to his axiomatic statement, namely that the universe is a manifestation of God as an all-embracing Personality. Indeed the book is symptomatic of this widespread modern corruption of a profound truth by exaggeration. In the teaching of the *philosophia perennis* divine immanence is a principle freely admitted but such an admission is checked by the scholastic denial that God is exhausted in the universe, that He Himself is identical with the riches He has scattered broadcast over the world. Thus, according to the scholastics, God is both transcendent and immanent as regards the universe. The Ultimate Reality is not essentially connected with us and yet is definitely related to us and our world. The explanation which the *philosophia perennis* offers of this seeming paradox of Divine intervention in human life goes down, as has been said, into the very catacombs of thought.

That scholastic explanation is not called for here. Suffice it to say that modern idealism, whether presented by a philosopher as such or by a learned scientist who assumes the philosopher's robe for the moment, is crippled at the very start by a vicious epistemology. To the idealist philosopher the life of the universe is mind, altogether and entirely mind; matter and mind cannot co-exist in their hostile camps in the One. Therefore matter must go. And the One readily and necessarily becomes some such concept as an all-embracing Personality which is supposed to give a satisfying answer to the cosmic problems that harass our human souls.

Not thus did Aristotle face the cosmic problem with his thought of a Supreme Being drawing all things like a lodestar. Not thus Plato with his notion of a Beauty absolute and simple and continuously imparting itself to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things. Not thus Augustine, Aquinas, and the rest. Not thus even Pringle-Pattison with his idea of "the eternal fashion of the cosmic life" and of the self-revelation of the Divine in and to finite spirits. Against three hundred years of the Cartesian heritage there is to be set a long period of more than twenty-three centuries of human thought.

In conclusion it must be noted that Professor Haldane writes with a clarity so unusual that even the layman can readily follow the philosophical and scientific lines along which the argument runs. But the little volume is not without its element of poignancy, for the very clarity and confidence with which it maintains untenable positions testifies that extreme immanentism is preparing its own deathbed: is posting itself in a position where it is open to the assaults of a sounder tradition.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Man and Politics*

"THE nineteenth century was brought to its disastrous end by a conflict between industrial technique and political theory." Such is the true but rather superficial verdict of Bertrand Russell in his recent book, *Freedom versus Organization*. It is superficial for the simple reason that Bertrand Russell himself is precluded by his own lack of the humanist's insight from getting at the real root of the matter. This is nothing less than the problem of rediscovering the "forgotten man". We have heard much in past years about *homo sapiens* and *homo faber*, the man who thinks and the man who makes things, and the latter is invariably assumed to have come first in the order of "evolution". "Man", as Spengler would have it, "is a beast of prey." "Ideals are cowardice" and man became man "through the genesis of the hand". Nowhere was there any allowance made for *homo agens*, man the doer of human deeds or man the moral and religious being that none of us can escape.

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* MORALS AND POLITICS: Theories of Their Relation from Hobbes and Spinoza to Marx and Bosanquet *by E. F. Carritt* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 216 pp. $2.25).

The result of this, as things stand, is not so much "a conflict between industrial technique and political theory", as an undue subordination or abject subjection of man to things and of the human person to material ends. This is owing in no small measure to the complete failure of political theory – in the sense of a philosophy – to maintain a true idea of man as a rational, social, and political being whose destiny it is to dominate himself with a view to higher spiritual ends, to which ends his mastery of external things should be subordinated as a means. Jacques Maritain is his recent treatise, *Du Régime temporel et de la liberté*, has admirably analyzed this gradual failure and anti-human tendency in what he calls "la dialectique de la culture moderne". But for present purposes I shall draw upon an author nearer home. W. Y. Elliott in *The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics*, after adverting to the futility of the present-day philosophers in things political, points out how

> the "scientist" has, for his part, contented himself with describing the way political phenomena actually occur and the manner in which political animals habitually do behave. They seemed to him best treated without ethical or metaphysical bias if he were to qualify as a true scientist. Politician and "scientist" have shared (of late more

than ever) a fine pragmatic contempt for the abstract solutions of philosophy. They have been interested only in the matter of technique — the politician as an artist, the political scientist *qua* scientist. But to have no principles is surely as socially dangerous as to have too rigid ones.

What is meant by too rigid principles is not made clear. "Erroneous" would perhaps be nearer the mark. But the point is, why this utter disregard of ethical and metaphysical principles in the realm of morals and of politics? Or why has modern philosophy failed to maintain an adequate conception of *homo agens*? It was not always thus. As R. H. Murray says in his biography of Edmund Burke: "He excelled in raising the passing to the height of the permanent, and he always brought the facts of the day to the touchstone of the principles of all times." And certainly, but for principles of whose soundness the leading minds among the Framers and early administrators of our Constitution were fully convinced, we would not be the nation that we are today.

That there has been an aberration somewhere in our tradition from sounder ways of life and of thought would seem to be indicated by the fact that such terms as moral or political obligation, rights, liberty, and equality have lost all intelligible significance in any of the contexts given them in our "modern" systems of philosophy. Nor is the reason for this far to seek.

Maurice Blondel in the second volume of his *magnum opus*, *La Pensée*, just published, has, I think, put his finger on the fundamental source of error and in such a way as to make the fact stand out as a simple reminder of common sense. As he says:

One whole section of our civilization is founded on a conception that is absolutely rational, juridical, ideological, and egotistical. This, originating as it does in the ideal of order and of fixity which characterized Hellenic speculation, Roman law, Renaissance classicism, and modern rationalism, holds to the picture of an organization of the human world according to a standard of quasi-mathematical exactitude. Beings whether individual or collective appear, in such a reckoning, as sheer absolute atoms, each seeking its own conservation and development from a strictly egocentric point of view. On this basis, wherever it is found necessary to combine with other realities, equally centripetal, it is assumed that this can be done only on grounds of self-interest and for coldly calculating reasons. Hence, the tacit presupposition that justice itself has but the negative function of defending and preserving such acquisitions as have been achieved with a view to further conquests equally referable to an agent, who respects others in so far only as he himself is respected and protected. In this perspective all sentiment of mutual dependence ignores the evidence of reciprocal indebtedness and despite ever-growing manifestations of solidarity, justice is never considered as in any way active or propulsive.

Should anyone doubt the degree in which this vitiated and vitiating pagan egocentric point of view became the fundamental and first assumption in all our so-called modern philosophical systems that have attempted to deal with ethics or politics, he can do no better than read and re-read E. F. Carritt's very timely little book, *Morals and Politics*, just brought out by the Oxford Press. In the course of some two hundred pages the author presents us with a most painstaking and searching analysis of the theories of Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Rousseau, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Green, and Bosanquet with a view to ascertaining the reasons they laid down in explanation of the fact of our recognition of political obligations. As he tells us by way of a summary of his findings, in the introduction:

> In books upon the subject which I read, I constantly find terms to which I attach no definite meaning. Some of these are terms only met in the writings or talk of philosophical students such as "general (or real) will". Others are terms in common use such as liberty and rights, but in these books they are evidently used in some uncommon sense which I find it hard to determine. In order to clear my mind on these points I have tried to trace the development of these expressions, to observe how and for what purpose philosophers got into the way of using them as they do. The conclusion which I reached and which I should like my readers to reach by the same method, was that this unfamiliar way of speaking was intended to describe such very familiar facts as that men often do obey, and think they ought to obey, laws as such; but that the writers in question were for certain reasons not content to treat obligations and rights as realities. They wished to explain our belief that we ought to obey the laws as an inexact way of thinking about some other facts, such as it pays us to obey them.

In other words, as he illustrates quite clearly in the course of the enquiry, all these so-called modern philosophers, with the exception of Locke and Kant, start on the assumption that self in the sense of an exclusive self-interest is the only possible end and motive of all our conduct as individual human beings. On such ground none can assign any intelligible reason as to why the state, with its law and government, should or does exist. The upshot of this initial libel on human nature and of the false issue thus raised in the premises was the attempt to deal with the consequent illegitimate problem on the basis of Rousseau's metaphysically as well as logically insane notion of the "general will". This, because it insists on being mere will without intellect or objective reason to determine it, refuses to be general; and as perpetuated through Kant and Hegel, Green or Bosanquet, it becomes no more than the gratuitous assumption of a naturalistic force in nature, nominalistically termed "the public will", which can do no wrong for the simple reason that it is wholly unmoral. To obey this, it is maintained, is to obey our own "real" will, whatever our actual will may be. No wonder the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the abdication of politics in the face of economic "forces" when the "received" modern philosophers could go such lengths in their flaunting disregard of common sense. As Burke insisted in his protest against "the disciples of the Parisian philosophy":

> I cannot too often recommend it to the serious consideration of all men, who think civil society to be within the province of moral jurisdiction, that if we owe to it any duty, it is not subject to our will. Duties are not voluntary. Duty and will are even contradictory terms.

True it is, as Carritt points out, both Locke and Kant distinguish men's duties from their interests. But while Locke appeals to a law of nature or of reason, which on his premises is a mere rationalization of the right to self-preservation, and holds for an exclusive right to property as the only end for which individuals contract the state into existence, Kant sets out to establish a complete severance between duty and desire. "He founds the duty of obedience upon our duty to other men and upon their rights to liberty, the protection of which is the justification of the state." But as all human desire is necessarily selfish, "men differ as to the constituents of happiness so that their wills could not be brought under any common principles or under any external laws which should be compatible with the liberty of all". There is no political duty either on the part of the individual or of the state to promote well-being. The state, itself, arises not out of any normal exigency of our common human nature but in consequence of "the unsocial sociability of men", which under the impulse of Nature "becomes at length the cause of an order among them that is regulated by law" (*cf.* Kant's treatise on *The Natural Principle of the Political Order*).

What wonder can there be that the pragmatist, whether "scientist" or politician, should conclude that the political philosopher had surrendered into his hands, if this is the best that philosophy has to offer. But such is not the case. Carritt, with the superciliousness of those bitten by the spirit of modernity, passes over Aristotle's view of the state as a partnership for common good or mutual advantage. Furthermore, he absolves himself, in unscholarly fashion, from having to study St. Thomas, by making the Angelic Doctor appear as having propounded an absurd doctrine — a doctrine decidedly contrary to what St. Thomas did hold. Had he maintained an open mind he would have allowed for an entirely opposite tradition, well tried and much older than the so-called "modern" one to which present-day attention has been unduly confined. To this Burke gave testimony when in his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* he declared:

> If the social ties and ligaments, spun out of those physical relations which are the elements of the common wealth, in most cases begin and always continue, independently of our will, so, without any stipulation on our part are we bound by that relation called our country which comprehends (as it has been well said) "all the charities of all". Nor are we left without powerful instincts to make this duty as dear and grateful to us as it is awful and coercive.

But the best philosophical answer to the modern radical individualist misconception of human nature will be found I think in Maurice Blondel's famous work, *L'Action*, where he devotes a whole chapter to a most masterly analysis of the individual's will in its relation to and dependence on society. And in conclusion I shall quote the following paragraph as a sample of the adequacy of his position:

> No sooner do we bring ourselves to act freely than we implicitly demand thereby that society exist, because society is the terminus of the unfolding as well as the necessary guarantee of our action. We cannot rest except in the effective and affectionate concordant action of wills capable of meeting us with the same freedom and confidence which we display with respect to them. Although, in short, it is still and always *a* will – my personal will – which seeks itself, it must, to follow out its own true nature, be on its guard against any immediate return to egoism. The same motion that inclines me to will that another be like myself leads me to will that, for me, he remain other than I am, precisely because I seek for that which he has within himself that is incommunicable. It is this mystery, this infinite in his life, which attracts me the

more, the less I am able to penetrate it. I do not truly admit that he is in himself as I am in myself unless I refrain from referring his deeds, his life, or his person to my individual self; or rather unless, respecting these in their integrity, I subordinate myself to him according to the measure in which I subordinate him to our common action.

For all our technical achievements, "the forgotten man", *homo agens* or man the doer of human deeds, might still be enjoying his high estate had the modern moralist but allowed for the simple fundamental truth of human nature expressed by Browning's *Andrea del Sarto*, called *The Faultless Painter*:

> *Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,*
> *Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,*
> *Placid and perfect with my art; the worse!*
> *I know both what I want and what might gain;*
> *And yet how profitless to know, to sigh*
> *"Had I been two, another and myself,*
> *Our head would have o'erlooked the world!"*

MOORHOUSE F. X. MILLAR

An Analysis of Dickens *

MR. KINGSMILL is always urbane and witty, he has aesthetic convictions which are reliable both in their explicit and their implicit consistency, and he is a true man of letters. For these reasons he is one of the best literary critics alive and anything he writes is not only worth reading; it is certain to be a very agreeable intellectual adventure. So if you are interested in literary criticism, or in the Victorian literary scene, or in Charles Dickens, *The Sentimental Journey* is required reading.

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* THE SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY *by Hugh Kingsmill* (MORROW. 246 pp. $3.00).

Many of us who owe Dickens a staggering debt of thanks because he peopled our childhood with characters who were at once marvelous and credible, have never gone back to re-read him because we were warned by other people's experience that to the adult mind he is tedious and sentimental. There are so many books clamouring to be read that it has been easy to heed this warning, but many of us have doubtless wondered why Dickens should one hundred years ago have been the idol of the reading public and now should be ranged along with the Oz books as nursery food. That this contrast is not to be explained in terms of Progress would be apparent even to the most rabid Progress-monger, in view of the fact (to mention only one of many) that Miss Gertrude Stein is now on a triumphal tour. The major contribution of *The Sentimental Journey* is Mr. Kingsmill's indirect answer to this problem – his analysis of Dickens's shortcomings, as man and consequently as artist, and his interpretation of the Victorian *Zeitgeist* – or, at least, of such of its aspects as moulded Dickens's mind and then hailed its own imprint as perfection.

Mr. Kingsmill's chief preoccupation, however, is not with Victorianism, but with Dickens's own temperament. He was a man with a grudge against the world, never free of self-pity, a vice which at once vitiated his emotional integrity and galvanized his energy toward the success he needed in order to right the injustices he had suffered in childhood.

> Dickens [Mr. Kingsmill writes], though intensely impressionable . . . resisted the penetration of his nature by his impressions, which he got rid of as quickly as possible by translating them into words. . . . Dickens could describe anything. What he could not do was to give with any depth or subtlety the emotions behind the exterior.

This thesis is carried out with meticulous detail, and bountifully illustrated both from Dickens's novels and from his private and public life. The effect, when one finishes the book, is so convincing, one understands so well what limitations to expect, that any reader, however adult, should feel quite happy about returning to Dickens's novels, or reading them for the first time, without fear of disappointment.

The most popular feature of *The Sentimental Journey* will probably be the ingenious detective-work Mr. Kingsmill has done in ferreting Dickens's Ego out of all his stories, unmasking it in his heroes (to say nothing of the villains through whom it did vicarious penance), and discovering it more subtly hidden in those of his heroines who are symbolic of Dickens's thwarted emotional life or embodiments of his adolescent yearnings. This detecting is admirably done and, again, is delightfully illustrated from source. But it is a highly speculative, if not questionable, aspect of literary criticism, and is more relevant to the psychologist's researches than to those of a serious literary critic. It must be admitted, however, that it is great fun.

ELEANOR CARROLL CHILTON